





2 NEWS

Sketch

Double act slips into old routine



Simon Hoggart

GOOD to see Gordon Brown back on the front bench again. Last week he was skulking in the far corner, hidden by the Speaker's Chair, while the "old enemy" (a reference, for this Scot at least, not to England but to Robin Cook) was making the best parliamentary speech of the past few years.

names for McDonald's hamburgers while on their way to kill a roomful of people. (Have you noticed that the country is now packed with Pulp Fiction bars, or Tarantino Anoraks as I suppose we must call them? It's not a bad film, but it shouldn't take over your life. But phone-ins are full of it. "What I mean is, Bob, what do you reckon was in Jules's briefcase when he opens it, you know, in the diner? I mean, I reckon it was like drugs, or sunnink...") I blame Gerald Kaufman, who made the film respectable.)



- Numbers of young decline
- Elderly up by 50pc
- More seek life in sun
- Rising cost of welfare

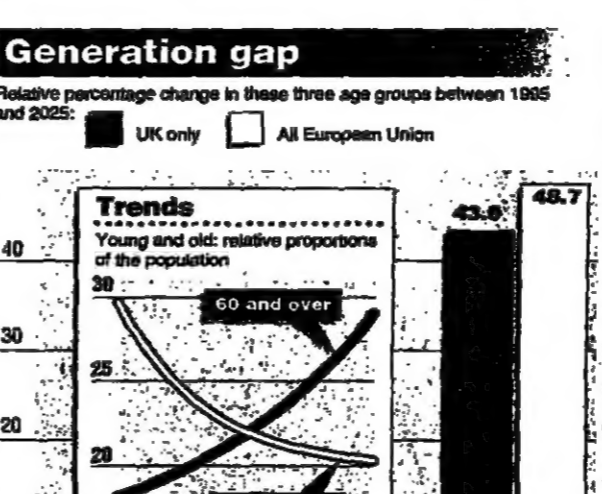
Stephen Bates on the ageing EU population



An elderly couple enjoy a night out in Madrid, but changes in demography will put pressure on welfare and economic systems PHOTOGRAPH: PETER HILZ

Europe faces a grey future

THE European Commission yesterday unveiled a striking picture of what Europe will be like in 30 years, with an ageing population and migration southwards towards the sun. The report projects an extra 37 million in the number of people aged over 60 — an increase of nearly 50 per cent. There will be 113.5 million pensioners in the European Union, nearly a third of the population.



market and the organisation of social protection. The report predicts that increasing numbers will head for the southern coastal districts of Europe because of their better climate and associated industrial development. It also argues that, while city centres are likely to continue becoming depopulated, the suburbs will grow and populations will be concentrated along the traffic corridors linking major cities.

First night

Nuance and detail on a grand scale

Andrew Clements

THE HIGHEST praise for Don Carlos, which arrives at Covent Garden in June, is that it should prove to be a worthy successor to the Royal Opera's famous Visconti staging, which did sterling service for more than 90 years. The new production is shared between the Châtelet, Covent Garden, Brussels, Nice and Lyons, and no doubt has a budget to match, but there is no feeling of opulence for its own sake. The grandeur and generosity of the conception are to be found in the all-encompassing detail and the meticulous preparation — as always with Don Carlos the action has a dramatic cogency and perceptive intelligence in every detail.

Bondy holds together the drama with enormous skill. There is not a careless moment or an unconsidered gesture. Gilles Aillaud's coolly elegant sets consistently create stage pictures as beautifully as the Bondy's direction is carefully precise. The biggest of the set pieces — the auto-da-fé in the third act — is superbly, economically managed, without a hint of a hammy procession. Yet the clash of private and public, and the sheer horror, are all terrifyingly real and carefully nuanced.

'Test case' over Tory MP's financial support

Patrick Wintour, Chief Political Correspondent

THE Labour MP Angela Eagle has filed a complaint to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, Sir Gordon Downey, over the financial support a Tory MP has been receiving to prevent him going bankrupt.

up a complaint from Labour MP Jeff Rooker, on the Thomson affair, saying he could not act on newspaper reports. Mr Rooker had submitted a Sunday Times report which included evidence of a financial support operation. Ms Eagle, a former member of the Select Committee on Standards, has been handed a copy of the report.

Eight major sports events guaranteed for free TV

Andrew Cuff, Media Correspondent

BRITAIN'S sporting crown jewels are to remain on mainstream television, despite the increasing financial muscle of satellite broadcasters, the Government conceded yesterday.

Virginia Bottomley, the National Heritage Secretary, said eight "listed" events would remain universally available to viewers. Despite the concession, the Government found itself on a fresh collision course with the Lords over an amendment which would guarantee highlights for the BBC or ITV of non-listed events shown live on Rupert Murdoch's Sky Sports channel.

amendment, which would force sports bodies to sell separate packages of rights for live coverage and highlights, was not desirable. But Lord Howell, the former Labour sports minister, who had forced capitulation over the list, said her stance would undermine British sport.

the Derby and Wimbledon finals weekend. The Government's amendment would guarantee coverage on free terrestrial channels, while satellite and pay-per-view services could offer alternative or fuller coverage. Mrs Bottomley claimed statutory intervention would be an unparalleled intrusion.

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LONDON

Florence



First conviction boosts hope of tackling new menace □ Victim's distress recognised as harm despite no physical contact

# Stalker jailed for mental GBH

Clare Dyer  
Legal Correspondent

**A**N obsessive stalker who waged a three-year hate campaign against a former work colleague and caused her serious psychological damage was jailed for three years yesterday for inflicting grievous bodily harm.

Former petty officer Anthony Burstow, of no fixed abode, terrified 28-year-old Tracey Sant in a campaign that included sending her a soiled sanitary towel in the post, stealing her underwear from a washing line, pouring solvent over her car and writing her sinister notes.

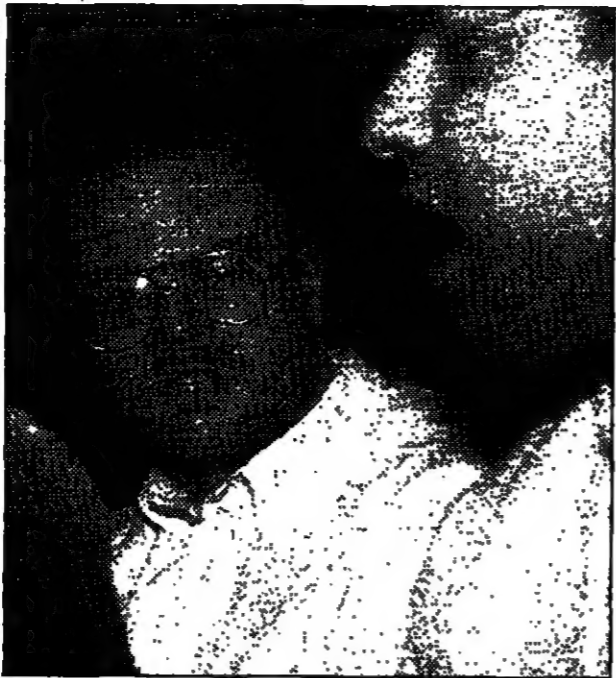
Burstow, who did not touch Ms Sant, admitted at Reading crown court, Berkshire, unlawfully and maliciously inflicting grievous bodily harm on her between February 19 and July 27 last year.

The case is thought to be the first in which a stalker has been convicted of inflicting GBH, although two men who harassed women and caused them psychological distress by telephone calls and stealing clothes have been found guilty of the lesser offence of causing actual bodily harm.

Although Burstow, aged 36, pleaded guilty, his conviction will be seen as a victory for campaigners demanding justice for victims of stalkers.

Britain has no specific anti-stalker laws but the Home Office is reviewing such laws in the US, Canada and Australia to see whether workable legislation can be introduced.

Sgt Linda Ferman, who has been involved in the case from the beginning, said a motion would be shown at a police conference in May



Stalker Anthony Burstow (left), whose obsession led to terror

calling for changes in the law to make it easier to prosecute stalkers.

Judge Josh Leit told Burstow, who also admitted stealing a nightdress and underwear from Ms Sant's parents' home, that he had subjected Ms Sant to a "prolonged mental ordeal" and "sought to control her whole life".

A note he had left on her father's car proved that he had intended to cause her psychological distress. It ended: "Let's remember this is totally personal. Nothing will change how much I hate you."

The judge read out doctors' reports which said that Ms Sant had been suffering from severe depression, sleeping

badly and experiencing panic attacks, all brought on by Burstow's psychological warfare.

Ms Sant said afterwards: "I am very relieved that it has finally been recognised that Burstow has affected my life and my health. But she feared that he would continue to torment her after his release from jail. 'I don't think this will be an end to it'."

Paul Reid, prosecuting, told the court that Ms Sant had struck up a friendship with Burstow while she was a civil servant at the shore-based HMS Collingwood in Fareham, Hampshire, in the summer of 1992. At the time Ms Sant was married to a serving

officer and Burstow's wife was away in Hong Kong. There was nothing to suggest that they were romantically involved.

She ended their friendship in August 1992 because she felt he was becoming too involved with her. "Burstow refused to accept this and from this time on developed an obsession," said Mr Reid.

In January 1993 he was bound over for two years after making nuisance phone calls and following Ms Sant in his car. In September 1993 he was sent to prison for three months for damaging Ms Sant's car by pouring solvent over it and was dishonourably discharged from the Royal Navy.

In May 1994 he was sent to prison for 18 months for burgling Ms Sant's home and stealing clothing, but was released the following August.



Tracey Sant, who said later: 'I don't think this will be the end of it' PHOTOGRAPHS: STUART COOK

# Beale freed in plea deal

Mark Tran in New York

**A**BRITISH woman accused of murdering her newborn baby in a New York hotel room will return to Britain in the next few days after last night striking a deal with US prosecuting authorities.

Caroline Beale, aged 32, was sentenced to eight months in prison — which she has already served — after pleading guilty to second degree manslaughter. The rest of her sentence consists of five years' probation and one year of psychiatric care.

At the beginning of the hearing, Ms Beale shook uncontrollably and spoke in a barely audible whisper.

The prosecuting attorney, Marjory Fisher, said the case was one of the most tragic in her 13 years as a prosecutor. The outcome was "fair and reasonable".

Citing a psychiatric report, Miss Fisher said Ms Beale, although aware of her action, had suffered from a pre-existing condition — depression. Ms Beale would need continuing psychiatric therapy and medication, she said.

Ms Beale will return to Britain with her parents, and will immediately start psychiatric treatment at the Maudsley Hospital in south London. Her treatment will last 12 months or longer.

A former Department of Health employee, Ms Beale was arrested in September 1994 at Kennedy Airport, New York, when she, her common-law husband, Paul Faraway, and two of his brothers were about to board a flight to London.

She had concealed the baby's body under her coat and told police she had hidden her pregnancy and the birth from Mr Faraway. She was charged with second degree murder, a charge that could have carried a sentence of between 15 years to life imprisonment.

After her arrest she was sent to New York's notorious Rikers Island prison, where she shared a jail with six inmates. Eight months later she was granted bail on condition that she stay in the state of New York and surrender her passport.

Her parents, who were by her daughter's side in her last few court appearances, put up their £100,000 London home as part of the bail arrangement.

# Old acts, old audiences as Ulster peace talks begin

Paisley in press success. Adams makes TV news. Mayhew predicted poor start. A win for everyone, reports David Sharrock

**T**HEY were talks, but not as we know them. As another page in the voluminous book of attempts to resolve Northern Ireland's troubles was being turned inside an ugly Belfast office block yesterday, Ulster's familiar political faces were doing what they know best — playing to their galleries.

The Rev Ian Paisley, leader of the Democratic Unionists, got his retaliation in first with a sparky press conference in east Belfast, a mile or so from the venue for the "invasive multilateral discussions" in Castle Buildings on the Stormont estate.

"So the drop-in centre is being opened today with a flourish of trumpets," he boomed. "And a lot of drop-outs will be attending. He claimed that he had not been issued with a proper invitation, but even if he had he would not be going there."

It was outrageous that the Irish foreign minister, Dick Spring — "What's this word 'invasive' Irish deputy prime minister?" he asked a reporter — was demanding that his suite of offices have exactly the same footage of space, the same inches of desk and even the same colour telephone as the Northern Ireland Secretary, Sir Patrick Mayhew.

Mr Paisley said that later this week he would meet John

Major and other parties at his normal place of work — Westminster. As for the *invasive*, it was said that Sir Francis Drake had been the beard of the King of Spain. "Well we will sing Dicky Spring's moustache."

That went so well Mr Paisley decided to stage the press conference all over again, and this time only 300 yards away from the talks venue.

The Ulster Unionist leader David Trimble was otherwise

engaged in his constituency, but will meet Northern Ireland ministers in London tomorrow.

Meanwhile politicians of widely differing views and electoral support were arriving at Stormont. Mr Spring shook hands with Sir Patrick; delegates from the Workers Party, SDLP, Alliance and the Ulster Democratic Party rolled up throughout the morning, in singles or couples. It was clear there was no agenda.

Gary McMichael of the UDP, the party linked to the loyalist Ulster Freedom Fighters, admitted as much. "Unfortunately I think there's going to be quite a few rooms

empty, but there you go," he cheerfully said.

His loyalist colleagues in the Progressive Unionist Party, which is close to the Ulster Volunteers, had decided to stay away. They have fallen out with Mr Spring because he failed to tell loyalist guests at a Dublin dinner about the proximity talks plan and announced the following morning.

PUP spokesman David Ervine said that while Mr Spring was at Stormont, he would not be. "No attempt has been made to heal the rift which is now a serious rift."

Then came the big picture event of the day. Just early enough to make the lunchtime television news, Sinn Féin arrived in force. There was Gerry Adams, Martin McGuinness, Pat Doherty, Shobhan O'Malley, Gerry Kelly, Tom Hartley, Lucilla Breatnach, some Belfast city councillors, minders and drivers.

They strode purposefully and slowly towards Castle Buildings. Like some modern day re-enactment of the Siege of Derry, the metal gates were closed in their faces and a Stormont spokesman blocked Mr Adams' path.

The Sinn Féin president made a speech to the spokesman — was he a security guard? — about the injustice of the situation.

The man standing between him and the talks venue explained the situation back. "If you wish to submit a request for a meeting with officials..."

are you referring to, are you representing the British government?"

Spokesman: "I do. The British or the Irish government officials..."

Mr Adams: "You're now representing both governments?"

This went on for some time. Meanwhile, senior SDLP members were slipping in-

side. Deputy leader Seamus Mallon said with a smile that he had no doubt that Sinn Féin's exclusion had been "very well stage-managed", but they still should be allowed inside.

As for the unionists, the SDLP would not meet them outside of Castle Buildings for the next fortnight. "There's one simple message to the

unionist parties, you can run but you can't hide."

The day wound on. Sir Patrick and Mr Spring finally emerged, refusing to accept that the first day of the timetable for June talks had been a farce. Inauspicious, yes, but predictable.

This went on for some time. Meanwhile, senior SDLP members were slipping in-



An official stops Gerry Adams as he tries to get into the talks

Mr Adams: "Which officials

# Women elevated to the level of motorbikes in T.E. Lawrence letters

John Ezard

**"P**LEASE believe that I don't love or hate the entire race of women. There are good ones and bad ones. I find — much the same as men and dogs and motorbikes."

This less than full-hearted endorsement from a bachelor who was, however, one of the world's keenest motorcyclists comes in a newly discovered set of 10 letters by Lawrence of Arabia.

They contain his pungent thoughts to a close friend on the ugliness of babies, the wretched eclipse of his

"Arab adventure", the drawbacks of totalitarianism, the prospect of a film about him and an eerie anticipation of his death.

The collection, dating from 1919 to 1934, is expected to fetch £20,000 at auction at Phillips in London on March 14. Felix Fryor, Phillips book specialist, yesterday called them superb examples of his vivid letter writing.

They were found in family papers in Truro, Cornwall, by the daughter of B.E. Leeson, a veteran with whom T.E. Lawrence served in the Arabian campaign. One letter gives his response to news of the

daughter's birth: "Children so young look more like bubbles in boiled grease than anything else."

His views on women were in retort to newspaper stories claiming he had a distaste for them. "Gods, what a foul imagination they conjure up," he wrote. "Because I don't drink or smoke or dance, all things can be invented."

In 1923 Lawrence wrote after changing his name to Ross and enlisting as a medal in the RAF: "After you left us, the Arabian adventure got rather too black and heavy and the gale died out; while the end of it left a nasty taste in my

mouth. Hence partly my disgust for my war personality. So please pardon a change of name. I'm fed up with being called Colonel and am determined not any more to be respectable."

In 1930, he wrote: "Don't harp on our ill luck at meeting; there are meetings and meetings. It might be like indignation or it might be on the open road, your Rolls doing a cool 60 and me a hot 90. That, now, would be ill luck."

In 1935 he was killed at high speed when he veered off a country road to avoid hitting two boys riding bicycles.

**Becoming a soldier had been a boyhood ambition for the South Wales youngster but he met abuse from his first day, and it continued until he left. In the British Army, as Evans and other black soldiers discovered, the notorious barrack-room bully has given way — but only to the barrack-room racist.**

# cover story

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4 BRITAIN

Orkney agrees 'abuse' payout

Erland Clouston

THE parents and children caught up in the 1991 Orkney child abuse scandal yesterday accepted an apology and financial compensation from the islands council in an out of court settlement.

The four families wrongly linked by social workers to ritual sex games in a quarry received sums significantly less than the £1 million they were originally said to be seeking.

The joint statement issued after a day of negotiations in Kirkwall acknowledged the council's responsibility for the "distress and trauma" experienced by parents when nine children were snatched in dawn raids and exiled to mainland foster homes and institutions for five weeks.

Neither side was prepared to discuss the size of the compensation which the council initially intended to oppose. Around £50,000 will come out of council funds, with a "not much greater" sum being contributed by insurers Commercial Union.

"The families are very pleased with the settlement, and are both pleased and relieved that what has amounted to an ordeal over the past five years has now come to an end," a council spokesman said.

An inquiry by Lord Clyde found that the four families at the centre of the affair should be presumed innocent. The judge criticised Orkney social work department, though he conceded that staff had been acting in good faith.

In yesterday's statement, the council said it fully accepted the criticisms in the report. The nine children aged between eight and 15 were seized after an eight-year-old told social workers about taking part in games in the quarry with a church minister. Her sister later corroborated and elaborated on her story.

Last night the two girls' mother, Mrs W, said she was delighted at the compensation award.

"They are certainly entitled to the money plus grovelling apologies because of the harm the authorities inflicted on them and others."

Two of Mrs W's 15 children have been fostered against her will and she is fighting a move to have her two youngest adopted.



Sentry duty... protesters at a camp on the route of the Newbury bypass await the arrival of security guards yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH ANDREW TESTA

Bailiffs 'were reckless' in bypass clash

John Vidal

MORE than 300 police and 1,000 security officers and bailiffs took all day yesterday to evict fewer than 30 people from four small protest camps on the route of the Newbury bypass in Berkshire. Twenty-eight people were arrested.

Legal observers for Friends of the Earth and independent witnesses alleged that the police turned a blind eye to reckless behaviour by bailiffs.

Alan Bridger, a solicitor and the senior observer on the "Granny Ash" site, urged protesters hailed out of the trees to seek legal advice with a view to suing for assault. He also complained that his team of observers was given no access to parts of the site.

"Arresting people 70ft in the air and turning them up

side down is so reckless as to quite likely constitute a criminal offence. These arrests are highly dangerous."

Protesters and bailiffs played cat and mouse high in the branches for several hours. Many climbing without rope or harness were pulled out from the tops of the trees into "cherry picker" platform cranes.

Those arrested included Arthur Pendragon, self-styled reincarnation of King Arthur, for possession of an offensive weapon, his broadsword.

Protesters accused the bailiffs of assault. One man was concussed after he fell out from a tree as it was cut down. More than a dozen press and legal observers say they witnessed a bailiff using a perspex shield to hit a protester 60ft up the branches. Police denied that the bailiffs used unreasonable force.

Crowning glory for the Commons touch

MPs can debate the monarchy, Speaker tells Major and Blair

Michael White and Ed Pilkington

THE Speaker of the Commons, Betty Boothroyd, handed a political hot potato to John Major and Tony Blair last night when she said that the Commons could debate the royal family if the two front benches chose.

"Nothing prevents this House debating the subject of the monarchy. It is for the Leader of the House [Tony Newton] or for the Government to make time for a debate to take place on that," Miss Boothroyd told Dennis Skinner, leaving MP for Bolsover, who asked if any rules prevented such a debate.

In the wake of Labour Welsh spokesman Ron Davies' attack on the Prince of Wales, there was no sign that Government or Opposition is seen to oblige backbenchers who have called for Parliament to discuss the issue.

The risks are too great. Mr Major has made no Commons statement on royal matters since announcing the Wales

separation in December 1992 when he wrongly predicted that it would not affect Diana's prospects of becoming queen.

The parliamentary rule book, Erskine May, confirms that either front bench could table the necessary substantive motion to allow a free-ranging debate. But humble backbenchers who tried to do so would be blocked.

"Labour MPs are torn between thinking there's a lot of hush about the monarchy in Parliament and a fear that such a debate would divert the front pages from our prosecution of the Government," a closet republican in Labour's ranks said last night.

Given the Tory eagerness to encourage a Labour feud, the fear is well founded. Senior union leaders and Labour stalwarts echoed it last night.

The Heritage Secretary, Virginia Bottomley, said last night "In my view those who flirt with republicanism are likely to get the result of the Labor Party in Australia," a reference to Paul Keating's weekend defeat.

In exchanges with Mrs Bot-

tomley, Tony Banks, the Labour MP who called for a referendum on the monarchy, sought assurances that no lottery money would be spent on the royal yacht.

Outside Westminster, a Guardian straw poll found little enthusiasm for the issue among leading Labour figures. John Edmonds, general secretary of the GMB union and a republican, warned the Labour movement against becoming over-excited about the debate.

"Our efforts must be focused on the economy and creating new jobs," he said.

Sir Jeremy Beecham, chairman of the Labour-controlled Association of Metropolitan Authorities, called the monarchy debate "a complete diversion".

He said "a constitutional monarchy is probably as good a system for head of state as any."

Andrew Puddephatt, director of Charter 88, highlighted Tony Blair's contradiction in seeking to end hereditary rights in the House of Lords while attempting to avoid discussing the future of the monarchy.

"Labour can credibly call for an end to hereditary peers while retaining the monarchy. What it can't do is try and prevent debate."

'The Crown reinforces instinct... of obsessive secrecy'

PETER HAIN, right, formerly chairman of the Tribune Group and a key voice on the centre left of the Labour Party, is now silenced by his status as a Labour whip, but last summer he set out a lengthy programme for what he described as "pragmatic republicanism". Some reports suggest that more than half the 27-strong Welsh Labour group of MPs would like Britain to be a republic in the event of a Labour government, the strong republican mood in Wales may have implications for the Prince of Wales. Here is an extract from his book Ayes To The Left, published last year by Lawrence and Wishart.

AS A modern democracy nears the end of the 20th century it is extraordinary, not simply that we have a monarch who de facto believes in her divine right to reign over us, but that we accept such nonsense. Its political significance is not underestimated by the Tory right for whom the cloak of the Crown is clearly hardly a legitimising force.

The Crown reinforces an undemocratic instinct of obsessive secrecy and unaccountability. Whitehall and the executive establishment exercise power in the shadow of the monarchy's mystique. MPs

are not even permitted to refer to the monarch in an adversarial manner in the Commons: when I asked in 1991 whether the Queen had been consulted over proposals to privatise the Royal Mail, I had to refer to "a certain person whose head appears on the stamp" in order to avoid the Speaker cutting me short.

The royal prerogative... allows the government to take decisions without parliamentary consent. Under Britain's unwritten constitution it is not clear what (if any) are the constraints upon the exercise of the royal prerogative by the prime minister and other ministers.



The monarch has also the power to dissolve Parliament and call an election. By custom and practice, this power is exercised with care and in concert with the prime minister. Nevertheless, it... could also be used to avoid an election in the event of the government losing its majority.

Because the concept of the monarchy is at the heart of the constitution any proposed structural changes would have a direct impact - removing hereditary peers from the House of Lords would leave the monarch exposed as the sole hereditary element in the constitution.

Republicanism is...

rooted in the British left tradition, but there is a serious argument that focusing the constitutional debate around the royals would divert attention and perhaps alienate support for other aspects of the reform agenda... it would be hard to justify an incoming Labour government immediately getting bogged down in abolishing the monarchy.

There is an argument for a Scandinavian slimmed down monarchy with ceremonial rather than constitutional functions. But even this would not meet the demand for full modernisation of the British state.

A president need not have executive powers on the US model. The Czechs elected a playwright and the Poles a shipyard worker. As Irish president, Mary Robinson is an excellent advertisement for the head of state in a modern monarchy.

As part of a strategy for reforming and modernising the British constitution, the left should adopt a policy of pragmatic republicanism. Increasing democratisation including abolition of the royal prerogative and House of Lords would steadily reduce support for the monarchy.

Tiptoeing around republicanism

Opposition fear of reaction keeps royal subject taboo

Michael White

THREE years ago an unnamed subject of the Queen placed £2,000 with a North London bookie on the abolition of the monarchy by the year 2000.

If the punter ever collects his £14,800 windfall, it is a certainty he will not turn out to be a Labour MP in disguise, for what is so striking about the history of a party committed for most of this century to a radical economic and social programme is the extent to which it has tiptoed around republicanism.

Yet it was widespread in British life through much of the late Victorian era, when the widowed queen's prolonged seclusion earned her public disdain.

By comparison political de-

bate is tranquil now despite the growing unpopularity of the Queen's family. Tony Benn has issued bills setting up a Commonwealth with an elected head of state. Labour MPs as different as Jack Straw and Ken Livingstone also campaign for abolition of residual powers under the royal prerogative, which successive governments have used to keep openness and accountability at bay.

But since Keir Hardie led them at the turn of the century, few have seriously campaigned to overthrow the House of Windsor, partly because they have had other priorities, partly because the royal family has usually been popular and Labour leaders as susceptible to the royal embrace as their voters.

To curb popularity and respectability prime minis-



Willie Hamilton: blazed a critical trail

ters from Ramsay MacDonald to Harold Wilson have defended the monarchy rather than attacked it. By the early 1990s even Neil Kinnock was telling MPs that he and Glens had been overnight guests at Windsor.

The conspicuous exception in post-war history was Willie Hamilton, who blazed a criti-

cal anti-monarchy trail and wrote a book called My Queen and I, but was written off as an eccentric.

It is a lesson which leftwing MPs have taken to heart. Even Ken Livingstone's manifesto for the 1990s, Livingstone's Labour, contains only one reference to the Crown.

Tony Blair shows no sign of radicalism on the subject. It was a contradiction of Mrs Thatcher's career that the throne was one exhausted institution she did not attack.

Yet Ron Davies, the shadow Welsh secretary, was forced to apologise for his comments about Prince Charles.

Edward VII had been a tabloid sort of King. George V was dull and dutiful, Edward VIII a dangerous reactionary. What rescued the monarchy was George VI and Queen Elizabeth's solid performance in the abdication crisis and the blitz. That legacy is wasting fast. It opens up a political opportunity for someone - if they dare.

Homeless aid spreads to Bristol

James Meikle and Geoffrey Gibbs

THE Government yesterday promised funds to combat homelessness in Bristol as it acknowledged that the problem was not confined to London.

It also launched checks on shelter in 23 other centres. The widening of the programme which has been running in London for six years was confirmed by David Curry, the housing minister. It includes work by charities, provision of overnight hostel places and more permanent accommodation. Alcoholics, drug takers and the mentally ill will be among "hard core" groups to benefit.

Bristol city council is being invited to team up with other organisations to bid for funds for a programme to tackle local problems. Up to 70 people a night are seen by Shelter's outreach worker.

The offer follows a Bristol survey as part of a wider audit of homelessness being carried out by the Labour-controlled city council. It made chilling reading despite showing the efforts

being made by Bristol's private, public and voluntary sector agencies.

The head count of rough sleepers in the hours between midnight on December 7th (a Thursday) and 4am the following morning found a total of 84 people in the city centre and a further 16 just outside the city boundaries. In addition, the survey identified 35 people sleeping rough in squatted buildings.

Temperatures in the city were below freezing and it was felt that the total identified had to be taken as a minimum number.

"Some of the conditions in which rough sleepers were found can only be described as appalling," says the director of housing's report on rough sleepers. "Some were found sleeping inside refuse skips."

The package, which also means new funds in central London, includes £73 million over three years specifically for rough sleepers, £25 million for advice services, especially for young single people, and £12 million from the Department of Health.

The announcement was welcomed by Homeless Net-

work, the umbrella group in London, and by the housing charity Shelter which also warned: "The combination of housing benefit cuts and the housing Bill's proposals on earlier evictions will mean that more people will end up on the streets."

A government paper published yesterday confirms there will be no change to the criminal law to force rough sleepers off the streets although legislation may be introduced to allow police to ar-

rest beggars with homes. Areas where evaluation of rough sleeping is proposed are: Manchester, York, Birmingham, Leicester, Nottingham, Cambridge, Norwich, Bath, Exeter, Gloucester, Eastleigh, Bournemouth, Brighton, Oxford, Reading, Tunbridge Wells and the London boroughs of Barnet, Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea, Richmond-upon-Thames, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest.

Advertisement for Tiptoeing Around Republicanism. Includes a form with fields for Name, Address, Postcode, Age (17-21), and Tel. Below the form is a large image of a person in a trench coat and hat, with the text 'ACCOUNTANTS, TRY HIDING THIS' overlaid.

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6 WORLD NEWS

The Guardian Tuesday March 5 1996

As Israelis fall victim to Palestinian militants once again, President Clinton's tattered foreign policy looks in urgent need of repair

# US tries to heal a wounded peace

Martin Walker  
in Washington

**T**HE United States president, Bill Clinton, yesterday urged Israeli and Palestinian moderates to make common cause against the latest wave of terror bombings and forge a coalition for peace against extremists on both sides. In an effort to save the Middle East peace process and his own peacemaking reputation, he said: "If you fight for peace, we will stand with you." Mr Clinton said. He reaffirmed US determination "to do all we can to stop the killing, to bring the killers to justice, and to assure that terrorism does not triumph over peace in the Middle East."

"Once again the enemies of peace have murdered completely innocent Israeli citizens — including children — in their hysterical, determined, fanatic attempt to kill all hope of peace between Israel and Palestinians and others in the Middle East. We must not give in to that." The US president drew a link between Israeli militants behind the assassinations last November of the former prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin, and the Arab militants behind the four bombings of the last nine days.

"They have one clear thing in common — they both want to end the peace process," Mr Clinton said. He demanded that the fledgling Palestinian authority prove its sincerity with tougher measures against Hamas.

"I believe Mr Arafat will have to do more, everything he can — up to the limits of what is possible," US diplomats tried — without much immediate success — to persuade Syria to join Egypt, Jordan and other Arab states in condemning the bombings.

The Israeli delegation to peace talks with Syria taking place outside Washington broke off yesterday and prepared to fly back to Israel, despite US pleas to remain.

From the aeroplane bringing him back to Washington, the US secretary of state, Warren Christopher, contacted the Syrian foreign ministry in a personal appeal for a public statement in condemnation of Hamas.

Mr Christopher has made a huge personal effort to secure

a final Middle East peace deal, making 17 trips to Damascus to try to cajole President Hafez al-Assad into a peace treaty.

Still hoping for another historic handshake at the White House lawn, Mr Christopher remains committed to his mission. He told aides yesterday: "We have to ensure some good comes out of this tragedy."

He believes that revulsion towards Hamas could yet forge a coalition of peacemakers among Israelis, the Palestinian authority and other Arab states. If Syria can be brought on board, Syria hosts a number of anti-Israeli Arab militant groups.

Israel has not publicly blamed Syria, but yesterday accused the government of Iran of being indirectly responsible for the Hamas wave of terror.

"Iran is one of the main supporters, instigators, supplying training facilities, arms and political support for these groups," Gadi Yaacobi, Israel's ambassador to the United Nations, said yesterday.

Last night, President Clinton returned from a trip to Detroit to consider his policy options. These range from new sanctions against Iran to further measures against any Arab-American groups suspected of raising funds for the militants.

Mr Christopher flew to an emergency meeting yesterday with the defence secretary, William Perry, the national security adviser, Tony Lake, and the CIA director, John Deutch.

They were in effect confronting the collapse of the administration's foreign policy. The careful construction of Mr Clinton's image as the global peacemaker is now visibly faltering.

"This is terrible for the president's policy, and all the options in an election year, it is all coming unravelling," said Edward Atkeson, a retired major-general and Middle East expert with the Centre for Strategic and International Studies.

Mr Clinton has few good options in the Middle East. The US is unwilling to be seen to be taking sides in Israeli politics, with a general election looming in May. There are few pressures that the US can exert upon Syria or Iran.

Amos Oz, page 9



Tel Aviv... Bystanders rush to help medics treating those injured in a Hamas suicide bomb attack in Tel Aviv which killed at least 12 people

PHOTOGRAPH: MOTTI KAMON

## Time bomb ticking in camp's squalor

Jessica Berry in El-Fawwar

**T**HE homes in the El-Fawwar refugee camp belonging to the two Islamist suicide bombers responsible for the horrific attacks on February 25 were destroyed yesterday by the Israeli occupying army. It was a collective punishment.

El-Fawwar camp, just a few miles south of the flashpoint West Bank town of Hebron, is, according to one Hebron resident "a large reservoir of human misery". Open sewage channels divide its tiny streets. Young children run about barefoot in the mud.

Neglected by Israel and the Palestinian Authority, El-Fawwar is, according to Khaled Amareh, a well-

known Islamic commentator, a time bomb waiting to go off. And it did — last Sunday.

Ibrahim Sarahna, aged 25, and Majdi Abu Wadeh, aged 19, were the "martyrs" who blew themselves up killing 26 people in twin bomb attacks in Jerusalem and Ashkelon. Majdi left a note saying he wanted to be a martyr.

In the aftermath of the bombs, their mothers and other female relatives — the men had already been arrested for questioning — sat under blankets in their leaking and bare brick homes receiving "congratulations" from Hamas supporters. Instead of the normal mourning custom, where visitors are given bitter, black coffee, they handed out sweet juice and baklava.

With tears in her eyes, Ibrahim Sarahna's mother, aged 60, told of how happy and proud she was for her son, who had died like a hero and had gone to Allah. "He was very quiet and prayed a lot. The children loved him. He was always laughing and smiling," she said.

But now she has no one to look after her. Her five other sons were still in prison and her husband died when Ibrahim was eight. "We have no money saved. Who will feed us? Maybe Allah," she said.

Ibrahim had been the family's hope. He had registered at Hebron university and was earning money to pay his way by teaching at the local United Nations school.

Majdi Abu Wadeh, described by his mother as "normal" and very kind, was a high-school student. He had been jailed a few times. He wanted to learn to make floor tiles.

Lurid photographs of the two men adorned the families' walls. Majdi's photograph superimposed a backdrop of the Rock mosque, shows him holding a victim's decapitated head in his hand.

The residents of El-Fawwar are contemptuous of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Most, if they voted at all in January's first Palestinian elections, chose Hamas supporters. In Hebron the turnout was 18 per cent.

Mr Amareh said he was not surprised the two bombers came from El-Fawwar. "It is one of the most despicable camps and a consistent target of Israeli repression because it is just next to an army base," he said.

Last Sunday's bombs should sound an alarm bell in all of us. If the callousness continues, other camps will try to emulate what the two guys did to wake people up."

Mr Amareh believes there is a chance the two could have acted independently of Hamas — anyone can make a bomb. "What counts is the decision to make a bomb. The rest is detail," he said. "If you have the determination and the motive, you can do it — and there is no shortage of motive."



Jerusalem... An Israeli woman comforts a friend after hearing about the bomb in Tel Aviv

**'Do not lose faith'**  
Israeli prime minister, Shimon Peres

**'Let us again state our determination that these forces of terror shall not triumph... We must not give in to that'**  
President Clinton

**'The civilised world will not, must not, tolerate these acts of terrorism, which have no goal except the undermining of the Middle East process'**  
UN secretary general, Boutros Boutros-Ghali

**'We will co-operate with the Israeli government to confront these dangerous criminal acts'**  
Palestinian president, Yasser Arafat

**'The woman standing in front of us was killed. When it happened it was like an earthquake, a big earthquake as if they were showing a movie — it was just like that'**  
Bat-el Levy, aged eight

**'Peres doesn't come here, but we'll go to his funeral'**  
Israeli bystander

**'I condemn this sick act of violence and those who planned and executed it'**  
Malcolm Rifkind

## No end to cycle of bloodshed as Hamas takes revenge

**T**HE bomb blast in Tel Aviv yesterday was the fourth attack on Israelis since Yahya Ayyash, the Hamas master bomber known as "The Engineer", was killed in January. Hamas, the Islamic militant group, blamed Israel for his death and vowed revenge.

The following are details of the violent retaliation by Hamas so far this year.

January 5: Ayyash was killed when a booby-trapped mobile phone exploded in his hands in Gaza. Palestinians blamed Israel, which declined to take responsibility.

February 25: Suspected Islamic bombers killed 26 people in separate attacks in Jerusalem and the southern Israeli town of Ashkelon. Security sources said the bombings were in revenge for the killing of Ayyash.

February 26: Ahmed Abdel Hamideh, an Arab-American, rammed his car into a queue at a Jerusalem bus stop, killing one woman and injuring 22. He was shot dead by armed

## A silent city's heart stops beating

**S**hocked and grieving, people in Jerusalem are urging Palestinians to make a stand against violence, Derek Brown writes

**M**EMORIAL candles were burning last night in Jerusalem's Zion Square, barely a hundred yards from the spot where 19 people were smashed and torn to death by a bomb in a commuter bus on Sunday morning.

But last night's candles were brand new. They are not for the bus. They are for Dizengoff (the Tel Aviv shopping centre where yesterday's bomb exploded), a young man said quietly.

He was one of a small group of young members of the opposition Likud party, subdued and polite, who had gathered to mark yet another massacre.

"I don't know what I think about it," said Karen, who looked about 16, as she shielded the candles from the breeze with a makeshift poster. "I can't think about

on those buses, and in Tel Aviv as well."

There was little sign of anger on the streets last night, though that could change at a moment's notice. In Tel Aviv they were shouting "Death to Arabs", just as they did in Jerusalem a day earlier. But in Zion Square the mood was a leaden mix of grief and shock.

"I don't hate the Palestinians. I hate the Hamas," said a burly man, brusquely shushing his companion who was growling angrily in Hebrew.

A middle-aged woman, close to tears, asked: "Where are they, these peace-loving Palestinians? Where are their protests and their condemnations?"

It is a bitter question and a valid one. As at least one writer pointed out, in yesterday's Ma'ariv daily, Israel has always had a vocal peace movement, ready to condemn and protest. Hundreds of thousands turned out in 1982 to condemn their country's role in the massacres in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Beirut.

Some Palestinians agree, with more than a little shame. "The Israeli people who wanted to support the peace process went to the square to hear Yitzhak Rabin the night he was killed. They went there again for peace rallies. But the Palestinian people do nothing," said Nibaya, a freelance journalist.

"We have to pay for this peace. We cannot get everything and do nothing. The Palestinians don't understand the mentality of the Israelis. We are getting back our land without offering any assurances of stability. Unless we stand up against these [Hamas] people, the Israelis will never understand that we also want peace."

"More than 70 per cent of the Palestinians voted in the elections which were part of the peace process. We support the peace but we must do more to make the Israelis trust us."

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# Left waits in the wings as nationalists threaten to thwart the ambitions of Spain's triumphant right

## Catalonia offers no homage to Aznar



José María Aznar: putting on a brave face

John Hooper and Asteia Gooch in Madrid

**T**HE winner of Spain's general election yesterday had a first taste of the problems he will face in forming a government when the Catalan nationalists who now hold the balance of power declared they would deny him support. José María Aznar, leader of the conservative Popular Party (PP), admitted: "The situation is difficult," but added, "I will do everything in my power to get a stable government."

As analysts speculated about a possible "Italianisation" of Spanish politics, the country's stock exchanges were being rocked by some of their biggest-ever losses. The Madrid Bolsa's general index plunged 16.84 points to end the day almost 5 per cent lower.

Basque terrorists were quick to exploit the prospect of instability. An officer of the Basque country's regional police forces died after a bomb planted under his car exploded in the town of Irun near the French border.

Final results from Sunday's poll showed the PP had won only 156 seats in the key, lower house of the Cortes (parliament). There are 350 places in the Congress of Dep-

**Spanish election results**  
(1980 results in brackets)

Popular Party	156 (147)
Spanish Socialist Workers Party	141 (158)
United Left	21 (18)
Convergence and Union	16 (17)
Basque Nationalist Party	5 (5)
Canary Islands Coalition	4 (4)
Nationalist Galician Bloc	2 (0)
Herrri Batasuna	2 (0)
(Basque separatist)	2 (2)
Catalan Republican Left	1 (1)
Euzko Abertzaskuntza	1 (1)
(Basque separatist)	1 (1)
Valencian Union	1 (1)

uties, but two deputies chosen to represent Herri Batasuna, the electoral front of the Basque separatist organisation ETA, are not expected to take their seats. Mr Aznar could enjoy an outright majority with the support of the two-party Catalan nationalist alliance, Convergence and Union, and the centre-right Canary Islands Coalition (CC).

A prominent CC official said the party was ready to do a deal with the conservatives. But one of the leaders of the Catalan alliance, Pere Esteve, said he could not even foresee negotiations with the PP.

"At the moment we do not see a dialogue with the PP as possible, because for many months and on many occasions we have repeated that the views of the PP with respect to Catalonia are unacceptable," Mr Esteve said.

Last night, Catalan nationalist sources said Convergence and Union would propose to the Socialists that both groups abstain when Mr Aznar seeks a vote of confidence in parliament.

Although Convergence and Union is to the right of the centre, its hopes of a quasi-federal Spain clash with the PP's traditional centralism. Under the Spanish constitution, if the prime minister designate fails to win an abso-

lute majority in parliament at the first try, he can make a further attempt within two days. At the second try, he needs only to secure more votes than No votes.

However, there is some doubt as to whether Mr Aznar can achieve even that. If Convergence and Union were to abstain, and the left were to vote solidly against him, the left could force a draw with the PP and its natural allies at 168 seats each.

In Andalusia — which held regional elections on Sunday — the Socialists, who had feared the loss of a traditional stronghold, were overjoyed to have defied the forecasters. "We have turned the polls on their heads," supporters chanted as the regional premier, Manuel Chaves, arrived for a victory party in Seville.

Felipe wks, page 9



Pilgrims' progress... Thousands of Muslims return home on a crowded train crossing a bridge at Gazipur, near Dhaka, yesterday after an Islamic festival

## Photographer to face charges as Serbs retaliate

A Muslim news agency man is being held in a windowless freight container, writes **Julian Borger** in Sarajevo

**T**HE Bosnian Serb authorities said yesterday they would prosecute a Muslim press photographer in apparent retaliation for the indictment of a Serb general by the UN war crimes tribunal. Edjmet Delic, a photographer for Associated Press and the Bosnian state press agency, has been held for three weeks in a windowless freight container, after being seized by Serb police while taking pictures on a bridge joining government and rebel-controlled sectors of Sarajevo.

International monitors who have visited Mr Delic say he is in solitary confinement and has been threatened with execution. Alexander Ivanko, a spokesman for the UN International Police Task Force, said the Serb authorities had charged Mr

Delic with having served in the Bosnian army, and "with being the master of a Serb" in 1992. The photographer's colleagues described the charges yesterday as "preposterous". The charges were made two days after the Hague tribunal's indictment of General Djordje Djindjic for his role as quartermaster in the Bosnian Serb army during the 43-month siege and bombardment of Sarajevo.

Gen Djindjic denied the charges yesterday, but has refused to answer prosecutors' questions. Dressed in a white shirt, beige sweater and jeans, he told the

Hague tribunal: "The fact that I appear in front of this tribunal means that any officer of the army of the Serb Republic, or any civilian that happened to be in the war, could end up there." Nato officials in Sarajevo said yesterday that General Djindjic's indictment did not appear to have affected relations with the Bosnian Serbs, but sources in Pale said yesterday that senior Serb officers would hold meetings with Nato and government officials only on territory under their control.

The Serb army temporarily severed contacts with the Nato-led Implementation Force (IFOR) when Gen Djindjic was arrested and extradited to the Hague under Nato escort on February 12.

International monitors who visited Mr Delic last week reported said he gave "the impression of a person not having slept for a long time. His hands were shaking, his face was unshaven and of a grey colour, beyond normal. He was nervous and often near to tears." The report said that Mr Delic was being held in a shipping container near the headquarters of the Bosnian Serb leadership. The container is said to have an

electric heater, but remains "very cold". A UN official described his condition as "outrageous".

The office of the international community's High Representative for Bosnia, Carl Bildt, has demanded Mr Delic's immediate release. The former Krajina Serb leader Milan Martić yesterday defended his decision to order rocket attacks on Zagreb last year and said he would do it again. The UN war crimes tribunal in The Hague indicted Martić last July for ordering attacks that killed seven people and wounded hundreds of others.

## US gives Europe share in Nato military power

John Palmer in Brussels

**T**HE United States is ready to relinquish its direct control of Nato's military firepower under an agreement which will allow its European allies to run their own peacemaking and security missions. The accord signals Washington's readiness to let Nato's European members take greater responsibility for peacekeeping in the region and increases their leadership role in the alliance.

Under the agreement, air support, satellite intelligence and up to 70,000 combat troops including American technical experts can be made available for operations run by the Western European Union (WEU) and commanded by European generals. Throughout Nato's history, the US has provided its supreme military commander and insisted on direct control of its armed forces. The deal comes in the run-up to the European Union's

review of the Maastricht treaty later this month. This will debate what role, if any, the EU should have in security, and whether the WEU should eventually be incorporated into the EU.

At present the European Commission and the other EU institutions have no say in WEU decisions, a policy which Britain is determined must continue. France, Germany and other EU countries want to bring the two bodies closer together and eventually unite them in a common European defence linked to a reformed Nato.

Washington's backing for the agreement follows France's decision last year to work more closely with Nato's integrated military command. In future European security missions, Nato troops could fight alongside the Eurocorps — which Paris sees as the embryo of a European army and which already has French, German, Belgian and Spanish units. In a further concession, the US will allow Nato facilities

## Social democrats put price on their support for euro

Ian Traynor in Berlin and Paul Webster in Paris

**O**PPPOSITION social democrats in Germany and France are demanding Europe-wide policies on job creation, minimum wages, and shorter working hours as the price of their support for a single currency and reform of the Maastricht treaty.

Staking out their positions before the conference of European Union governments later this month that is to chart the EU's future shape and powers, France's Socialist leaders urged at the weekend that a new social charter be launched along with the single currency, while Germany's Social Democrats and trade union leaders called for a European "alliance for jobs". The German opposition declared that harmonised employment, economic, and financial policies should be bindingly enshrined in the Maastricht treaty. It also called for uniform immigration legislation throughout

the EU to regulate labour markets, and for European guidelines on repatriating cheaper foreign labour. "The same wages for the same work in the same place," had to be the governing principle across the EU.

A meeting of the French Socialist's national council heard several leading politicians demand that the single currency, scheduled for launch at the beginning of 1999, be accompanied by parallel social guarantees.

Lionel Jospin, the French Socialist's leader, said his party was in favour of the single currency. But many of the most influential leaders, who could return to government after elections in 1998, said that Mr Jospin's call for social guarantees should be strengthened into an irreversible condition of French support for economic and monetary union (EMU).

The German opposition controls the upper house in Bonn and could also block changes to the Maastricht treaty in the lower house

where Chancellor Helmut Kohl — with a slim 10-seat majority — is well short of the two-thirds needed for legislative changes ceding powers to the EU. Three crucial state polls later this month could determine the German opposition's policy on Europe. In the southern state of Baden-Württemberg, the Social Democrats (SPD) are running on an explicitly anti-EMU ticket. "This is seen by many as a trial for the next scheduled elections in 1998, only months before the single currency is due to be launched.

While EU-wide unemployment figures of more than 20 million form the context for the Social Democrats' arguments, senior trade union officials say the latest jobless figures in Germany, issued tomorrow, could be as high as 4.3 million. The German opposition is arguing for investment and higher energy taxes, while the French Socialists are to issue a European policy manifesto later this month.

## News in brief

### Fraud trial raises Whitewater spectre

**T**HE trial that could define the political impact of the Whitewater investigation on the president began yesterday. The investigation centres on whether Mr Clinton, his wife Hillary, or their associates improperly handled investment in property development while Mr Clinton was governor of Arkansas. Fifty-six potential jurors were brought into court yesterday to start preliminary questioning in the federal fraud and conspiracy trial of Jim Guy Tucker, the governor of Arkansas, and James McDougal and his former wife, Susan McDougal. Mr Clinton's two partners in the deal, Mr Clinton has been subpoenaed to testify, although whether in person, or by satellite or videotape, has yet to be decided. Convictions could have ramifications far beyond any criminal penalties. Mr Tucker, a Democrat, could be lashed from the office he, as lieutenant-governor, inherited after Mr Clinton won the presidency. And Mr Clinton's opponents will be watching for any evidence that could hurt him in the November presidential election.

Kenneth Starr, the Whitewater prosecutor, alleges the defendants benefited illegally from nearly \$2 million in loans from federally-backed banks. — AP, Little Rock, Arkansas.

### Vaccines flown in for Nigeria

**F**OREIGN relief agencies are flying millions of vaccines into northern Nigeria in an effort to contain an outbreak of spinal meningitis reported to have claimed thousands of lives, mainly of children. The crisis has been compounded by flare-ups of zoonotic enteritis, cholera and measles in the northern state of Kano, home of General Sani Abacha, the military dictator. The authorities have issued conflicting statements about the number of deaths. The military government denied at the weekend an earlier claim by Ibechukwu Madubuike, the health minister, that 15,000 people have died. The administration said 8,401 people in Kano had contracted spinal meningitis, which causes inflammation of the membranes surrounding the brain and the spinal cord. Children are particularly vulnerable. So far, 1,273 of those affected have died, the government said. Twenty million people are estimated to be at risk. The government said 8 million have been vaccinated. Médecins Sans Frontières is flying in vaccines and health workers; the World Health Organisation and Unicef have been called in. — Chris McGreal.

### Orthodox schism looms

**A** CRISIS in relations between the Russian Orthodox establishment and its brother church in Turkey, the Constantinople Patriarchy, will become a permanent schism unless Istanbul gives way, a senior Russian cleric warned yesterday. The hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church temporarily broke off relations last month, enraged by a Constantinople Patriarchy decision to take over from Moscow jurisdiction of the tiny Orthodox Church in Estonia. Metropolitan Kyrill, the Russian Orthodox cleric with responsibility for foreign affairs, accused the Constantinople Patriarchy yesterday of lying, of acting at the bidding of the Estonian government, of trespassing on a brother church's canonical territory and of forcing a schism by supporting defrocked priests. He said Moscow had not been told about the Constantinople decision to displace its jurisdiction and had learned about it from Finnish and Estonian news reports. The Russian hierarchy is concerned that the new leadership of the Estonian Orthodox Church, which is backed and recognised by the Estonian government, will force worshippers loyal to Moscow to leave places of worship. — James Mack, Moscow.

### New lounge for French lizards

**A**FTER the road crossing and the less successful pelican crossing, human beings have dreamt up a new road safety device for animals: the lizard lounge. Concerned at the environmental impact of upgrading a five-mile stretch of road near Strasbourg, eastern France, a local authority has spent £2,700 on 10 multipadios for lizards. They are intended to satisfy the reptiles' hedonistic desire to sunbathe. The inventor of the roadside lizard lounge, Gérard Baumgart, who also brought the *croqueton* (toad crossing) to France, realised it would have to combine the advantages of a beach resort with the snugness of a compost heap. What emerged was a 2ft earthenware platform on a sheet of porphyry rock. "The earthenware retains the heat better than asphalt — which is important to keep the lizards off the road — and we have noticed that our lizards like porphyry rock," he said. — Alex Dural Smith, Paris.

### PM warns Australian unions

**J**OHN Howard, Australia's prime minister-elect, yesterday warned the trade unions that he has been given an emphatic and unambiguous mandate to change the country after 18 years of Labour rule. The Liberal leader, buoyed by his landslide victory over Paul Keating at the weekend, said the new government's first action would be industrial relations reform. He also said helping small business and reducing youth unemployment would be at the top of his agenda after he is sworn in on Friday. While Mr Howard said he would continue the former government's programme of reconciliation with the Aborigines, there was little mention of the move into Asia and of republicanism, which were trademarks of the Keating years. His first battle with the unions is already brewing over plans to privatise one-third of the telecommunications giant Telstra to pay for his environmental package. — Christopher Zimmerman, Sydney.

### SA massacre trial opens



**S**OUTH Africa's former defence minister, Magnus Malan, leaves Durban's Supreme Court yesterday, where he and 19 other defendants face murder charges in connection with the 1987 massacre of 13 blacks in Natal during a bungled attempt to kill an ANC activist. The killers are alleged to have been trained by South African military intelligence in a project overseen by General Malan and other senior military officers during the apartheid era. Six of the alleged assassins are among the accused, as well as inkatha leader Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi's former secretary, M. Z. Khumalo, who is alleged to have been the link with the South African Defence Force. After less than an hour, the hearing was postponed for a week to allow the seven defence teams more time to study new conspiracy charges. Demonstrators chanted outside. Meanwhile, President Nelson Mandela's office announced he will undergo three days of comprehensive but "routine" medical tests this week. — David Beresford, Johannesburg.

**Now Sharon Stone wants to be a daunting combination of serious artist, businesswoman and Hollywood power broker. There's no doubt she has the willpower and the grasp of strategic planning to pull it off.**



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## Breathing fire at China Now Mr Major will have to keep his promises

HONG KONG heard some mildly good news from John Major yesterday, though it has had to wait long enough for it. His new commitment only confers a change in status to a tiny minority — 7,000 or so out of a population of 6.3 million. But Mr Major's tone was a welcome change from the perfunctory one which Hong Kong has too often had to endure from British cabinet ministers. And with just 16 months to go, he has signalled a British resolve — though still to be tested in practice — not to wash its hands entirely.

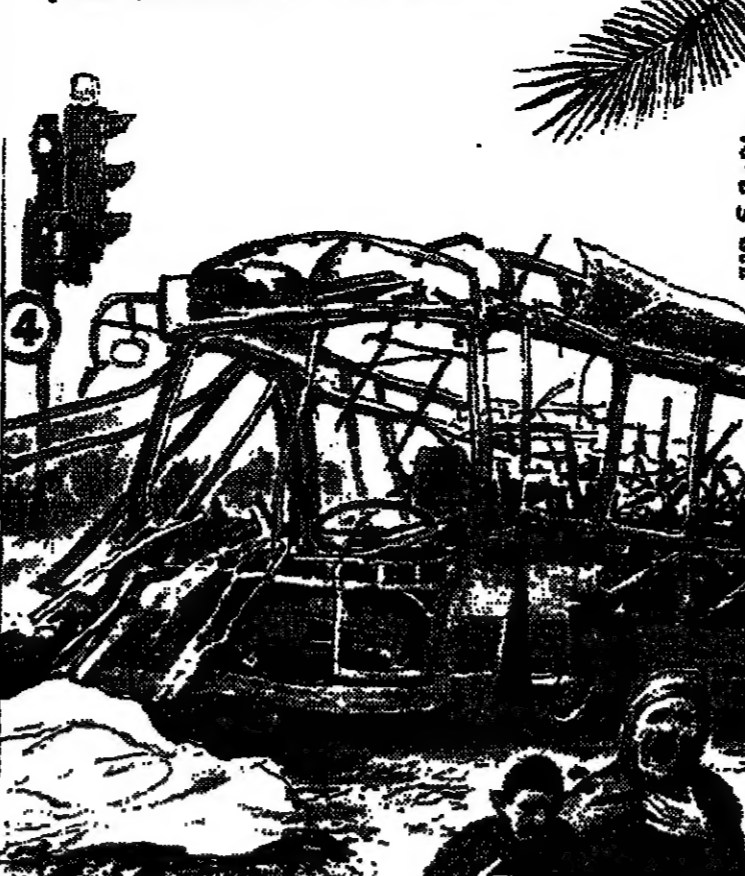
Mr Major's pledge to make visa-free travel to Britain possible for all Hong Kongers (not just those holding restricted British passports) means merely that they will have the right to visit, not to stay. But it should encourage other countries to allow similar entry for the three million or more who will hold new Special Administrative Region of China passports. It could also imply that, if affairs go badly wrong, Hong Kongers who fear political persecution may more easily get on a plane to Britain and seek refuge in the country which holds historical responsibility for their plight. Mr Major has also provided what he calls a "cast-iron guarantee" to the 7,000 among Hong Kong's ethnic minorities, mostly from the sub-continent, who will become stateless next year. His pledge to allow them to come to Britain if they have a "well-founded fear" that they must leave Hong Kong is firmer than previous assurances. It still falls short of the solution demanded by natural justice — to give proper passports to this small number marooned by the handover. These have only been promised to the 50 or so war widows whose case had been denied with quite astounding meanness up till now.

There are still good reasons for the scepticism shown yesterday by Hong Kong democrats. The possibility of the

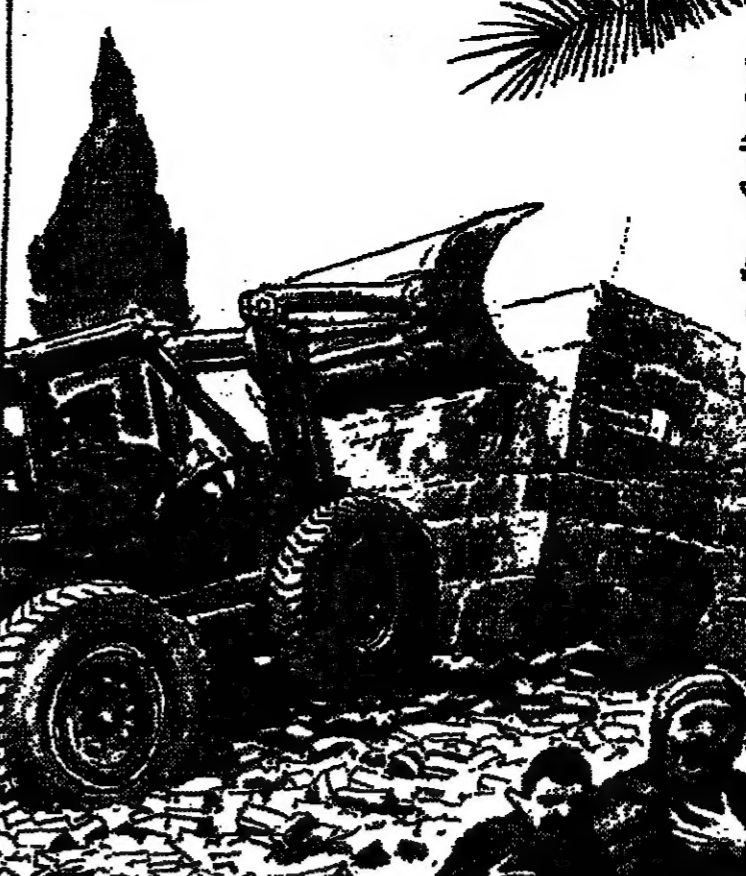
visa-free concession had been talked down determinedly in recent weeks by Whitehall. This reflected in part a hide-bound intransigence in the Home Office — apparently only overcome at the cabinet level last week. But it also enabled the gesture when it was finally made to seem that much more generous. Mr Major denies that he "agreed to disagree" with the Chinese premier Li Peng when they met at the Asian summit in Bangkok. The fact remains that Britain has not been making loud noises about Beijing's determination to disband the current Legislative Council and its ambiguous attitude on several human rights issues. On the contrary, there has been a perceptible shift, signalled by British diplomats and some ministers (particularly Michael Heseltine) over the past year towards putting Britain's post-1997 relations with China well ahead of the problems of Hong Kong. Some of Mr Major's remarks yesterday suggest a degree of greater resolve. He said that Britain would pursue "every legal and other avenue available" if the 1984 Sino-British Declaration were breached in any way. There is the difficulty that even the dismantling of the Council is not clearly in breach of an agreement negotiated at a time when Britain was largely uninterested in promoting democratic reform. But protest should not be inhibited by this. As Mr Major said, neither Britain nor the world will understand if the Council's life were to be "cut in half in 1997".

It may be recalled that Mr Major while visiting Beijing in 1991 overruled his officials' reluctance to enquire into Chinese human rights abuses. Yesterday he again appeared to assert a higher moral position: Hong Kong, he said "will not walk alone" after 1997. If these are not just empty words, they mean a real commitment which Britain will now have to live up to.

## HITTING THE HEART OF THE ISRAELI WAR MACHINE



## HITTING THE HEART OF THE PALESTINIAN WAR MACHINE



### Letters to the Editor

#### Hard cheese in Caerphilly

WHAT an inoffensive suggestion from Paul Flynn (Letters, March 4) and my own MP Ron Davies! Have I missed something — has the election taken place or was it Australia? Ron Davies should have been at the Caerphilly County Borough Council (the new unitary authority which is in his constituency) last week when, in addition to raising the council tax we were forced to cut back services in education and introduce charges for services to the elderly. I'm sure the same thing happened in Paul Flynn's local authority.

We can do without little Neros content to fiddle while the lives of those they are supposed to represent become more and more miserable. (Clr) David Fowler, 37 Mountain Road, Caerphilly, Mid Glamorgan CF83 1HH.

#### A varied selection

WILL Hutton's excellent exposition on the shape of the British education system (Look, listen, learn, March 2) he states: "Even the National Commission on Education remained silent on this question [of private schools]." While the Commission did not make recommendations on their future status, it did insist that the national curriculum be made compulsory for independent schools.

Of the seven goals forwarded in learning to succeed one in particular (overlooked by Mr Hutton) impacted upon both public and private schools. It said: "There must be courses and qualifications that bring out the best in every pupil" which means that there be introduced a fifth stage in the curriculum (Key Stage 5).

The Commission argued for a General Education Diploma (GED) at Key Stages 4 and 5, a means of redressing some of the imbalances between the more and less able, between the vocational and academic, and between the public and private sector in education.

If such a GED were established as a statutory award, the private education sector would be obliged to offer modules within the award. Philip Williams, (Former Research Officer, National Commission on Education, 22 Euston Road, London NW1 2BZ.

WILL Hutton is quite right to say that "... the reality of differing intellectual capacity has to be recognised" but he avoids discussing this in relation to primary schools. The streaming of children into ability groups is not an impossible task in secondary schools but state primary schools not only lack the physical resources but also the motivation since the concept of equality of opportunity is far nearer the surface in these early years of education. As parents well know, differing abilities manifest themselves in children at an amazingly early stage, demanding a much more useful response than the exercising of "talent" which in many cases consists of moving children to other schools. Rafi Mohamed, 3 Lugg View, Llansunio, Knighton, Powys, Wales LD7 1SN.

has happened in the last 20 years of so, such as the spread of comprehensives. Is a mere 6 per cent of the population middle class? Five times that would be a conservative estimate for modern Britain. That means that at least four-fifths of middle-class children attend state schools. The great majority of these go to LEA comprehensives. LEA comprehensives are the preferred option of the vast majority of parents. All that most of them demand — quite rightly — is that they be able to choose among variously good schools those they think best for their children. (Dr) Lawrence Silverman, Joint Leader, Berkshire County Council, 100 Stairs Hall, Shinfield Park, Reading, Berks RG2 9XA.

#### We've got the key to housing

YOUR leader (March 1) on Brighton's — and Britain's — first squatting estate agency is not simply naive but massively unfair to Brighton Council and its housing policies. Let's look at the issues. That empty properties and homeless people should coexist is a scandal. The chronic shortage of affordable, safe housing is a scandal. The Government's proposed deregulation of the housing market is a scandal. The level of knowledge within the system is often pitiful. The level of regulation is worse. You need a licence to run a cattery, but anyone can house human beings. There are properties owned by public and private agencies lying empty. A council survey in 1994 suggested that Brighton had 3,000 empty private dwellings — a 5 per cent vacancy rate which is in line with national figures. That's 3,000 empty homes and that's why we've set about filling them.

Brighton Council's Empty Properties Strategy is probably the most advanced in the country. We have to date brought some 500 empty properties back into use for people in housing need. We have done this in partnership with housing associations through a number of initiatives, including:

- Large scale leasing agreements with private sector owners;
- Filling empty flats over shops;
- Deposit guarantee and rent-in-advance schemes, including offers to single people and couples without children who would not be in our "priority need" category;
- Short-life leases, including supported accommodation for vulnerable young women;
- Using Single Regeneration Bid funds to redevelop a street of long-term empty and hard to let properties in central Brighton; and
- The unique "Empty Properties Grant" scheme to assist owners to bring properties back to proper standards. We are currently renovating a town-centre property which has been empty since just before the second world war.

Squatting agencies, with all the risk, danger and illegality are not the answer. Putting potentially vulnerable people into potentially dangerous properties is not the answer. Effective and controlled local authority intervention in the failed areas of the private sector is the way ahead. (Clr) Steve Bassam, Leader, Brighton Council, Longstone, 25 Church Place, Brighton BN2 5JN.

## The monarchy's future: discuss

Why can't politicians debate what everyone is talking about?

BRITISH politics is not very good at debating the monarchy, partly because it has so little practice, but it is time that it tried harder and did the job better. In particular it is time that the Labour Party, as a party of reform and potentially a party of government, found a way of giving a grown-up voice to the swelling popular debate on the issue. Labour is already committed to major constitutional change. It demands, rightly, to be taken seriously on the subject and will devote a substantial part of its programme to it. But Labour cannot do that effectively if it gags discussion on the institution which holds the whole British constitution together.

Professional politicians are inevitably scared of this debate. They think it attracts madcaps and does nothing but damage. This is not only true of Labour. It is also true of the Conservatives, whose institutional radicalism has always stopped short of the monarchy, and of the Liberal Democrats, whose leaders were petrified of a debate on the subject at a party conference two years ago. Professional political instincts, which are invariably conservative, tell politicians of all parties that real people are either not interested or are opposed to change. They fear that any party which gets itself into this debate will only lose. They will be accused of being loony. They are afraid that the wild words of a maverick will be used to tar the party as a whole. They see the party of the status quo having a field day.

The trouble with refusing to take part in a debate is that people assume you have nothing to say or something to hide. You also leave the field open to those who will not stay silent. Ron Davies may not have made the most relevant remarks on the subject at the weekend. But they were picked up because they were moderately interesting and because everybody knows that Labour is embarrassed by the monarchy debate. Inevitably, the issue has become a virility test between Tony Blair's disciplined caution and the frustration of some of his more independent backbenchers. A silly and avoidable situation.

There is a real debate to be held about the monarchy. Is it too powerful? Is it too expensive? Is it too much of an anachronism? Should it exist at all? And what are the alternatives? This conversation — or a debased and personalised version of it — is taking place endlessly in almost every home in the country, probably including Mr Blair's own. The monarchy is one of the great pieces of unresolved business in our society. Yet parties and parliament are utterly hopeless about reflecting it. There is no formal or legal bar on MPs discussing the monarchy, as the Speaker made clear in the Commons yesterday. There is only a political cultural cringe. The politicians have nothing to fear but themselves. A party which prides itself on its maturity should open up the debate, not try absurdly to shut it down.

#### MICHAEL Portillo argues that because most British soldiers support a ban on gays in the military, this should continue to be government policy (Soldiers back gay ban, says Portillo, March 4). A report showing endemic racism in the military has just landed on his desk. Is he going to adopt the same approach here? Roger Cornwell, The Avenue, Durham DH1.

ANICE try by Marc ALoewenthal (Letters, March 1) but the linguistic argument on the gender of God swings the other way. To *theion* was used by Paul (not John) in showing endemic racism in Athens refers to having male and female deities. In the next verse (Acts 17:30) it's the (masculine) *Theos* who "overlooked the time of ignorance". So too in Romans 1:20 Paul speaks of "his God's deity" where deity is *theiotēs* (feminine). John refers to the Spirit (neuter) as "he". These prove more the personality of God rather than his gender.

Apart from the "female" images of God in the Bible, such as the mother hen, and God as "wisdom" (she), the crucial passage for not getting too worked up about a woman portraying God is of course Genesis 1:27 where God creates man in his own image — "male and female created he them" (he male and female both in his image. (Rev) S Parish, 1a Fitzherbert Street, Warrington WA2 7QG.

I SEE that Sky Sports latest competition prize is a signed England cricket shirt. I trust that it comes with a guarantee that it will not fall apart at the seams the first time it is worn. Please include a full postal address, even an e-mailed address, and a telephone number. We may edit letters; shorter ones are more likely to appear. We regret we cannot acknowledge those not used.

#### ALAN Ryle is wrong to think that concern with the bones of the tribally important is recent (Friday Review, March 1). In 1898, Sultan Mkwawa of the Hehe tribe in what is now Tanzania was killed by the Germans after seven years' resistance to their rule. His head had a price on it and was removed, the skull then being sent to Germany.

The Hehe believed that until it was returned, they would never prosper again, and succeeded in getting a clause in Article 246 of the Treaty of Versailles to this effect. But in the turmoil of 1918 it could not be found.

After the second world war, Governor Twining of Tanganyika visited Bremen, where a skull was found with the right cephalic index and an appropriate bullet hole. It was accepted by Tanganyika's then Speaker, Chief Adam Sumpul, and passed across our desks in the Colonial Office via diplomatic bag to Dar-es-Salaam. It was restored to the Hehe on June 19, 1954 and now rests, in perspex, in a curious if colourful mausoleum outside the town of Iringa. Ian West Hill Road, London SW18 1LE.

#### Boning up on tribal history

JOHN Ryle is wrong to think that concern with the bones of the tribally important is recent (Friday Review, March 1). In 1898, Sultan Mkwawa of the Hehe tribe in what is now Tanzania was killed by the Germans after seven years' resistance to their rule. His head had a price on it and was removed, the skull then being sent to Germany.

#### HOW disappointing that someone as astute as Will Hutton should fall for the great metro-mania myth: that there is a comprehensive withdrawal of the middle class from the state system. The myth is exposed by asking just two questions about the proportion of children in non-state schools as quoted by Hutton — 8 per cent.

Is this a recent development? The figure has remained the same for many decades. It cannot therefore be due to anything that

#### ALL educational structures are a form of social engineering, the trick is to find the one which best meets the needs of society. If you want parity of esteem for academic and vocational qualifications you will not achieve it by re-introducing schools which select their pupils on academic grounds, even if you leave state until 14. If you want co-operation in the workplace, you will not achieve it if the managers and the managed have attended separate schools. This is a major cause of the state we're in.

Alan Fletcher, 61 The Riddings, Coventry CV5 6AT.

#### In defence

MARTIN Butcher is a bit hard on Will Hutton (Letters, March 2). Surely the Franco-German axis does envisage the EU as an eventual superpower — not just economically, but militarily, too. The debate about "defence sufficiency" and "non-offensive defence" always was rather fatuous. Given certain strategic realities — the proliferation of missile technology, the general nature of modern military operations and the ongoing enlargement of the EU itself, to name but three — these are increasingly redundant concepts.

Distinctions between "defensive" and "offensive" strategies have rarely proved persuasive, and Martin Butcher fails to see that "power-protection" missions, for instance, can be portrayed as being in accordance with either. (Dr) David Gates, Defence and International Security Studies, Lancaster University, Lancaster LA1 4YL.

#### Rail wail

IN addition to the £5.7bn handout from the public purse, one could consider the unseen millions paid by individuals living along the route (The Great railway give-away, March 1). We have either had to sell our homes at knock-down prices or accept unsaleable properties, effectively supporting the rail-link out of our own pockets. And the compensation on offer: double-glazing in the next millennium. C Smith, 6 Mildmay Grove, London N1 4RL.

## Pride and prejudice in the services

The military should integrate before Europe forces them to

IN any other public service, the leaders would have moved long ago. British armed services are not just racist — as a leak from a two-year investigation by the Commission for Racial Equality confirmed yesterday — but far more prejudiced about homosexuals than the public. People who doubt the racism should read our feature in today's G2 section and the sickening abuse which black recruits can suffer. People who doubt the services' homophobia should read the 400-page survey of military personnel attitudes published yesterday. An intelligently led military might pause for thought about the dangers of setting themselves apart from the social and moral values of the society they are supposed to defend. But there was no such leadership yesterday. Instead, even the Defence Secretary was ready to be led from the rear. Michael Portillo declared the controversial ban on homosexuals in the

armed services would continue. And, as though this was explanation enough, he said the ban was supported by the vast majority of service staff.

All armed services run the risk of becoming "a nation within a nation". That is what has happened with the British armed services. In H.G. Wells's celebrated phrase, they have been "sheltered from thought". What they see as common sense, the public regards as common prejudices. A recent Guardian/ICM poll showed that while a majority still regard sex between people of the same gender as wrong, there is widespread support for the principle that "declared" homosexuals should be able to work in the armed forces — and the church, police, schools and Parliament too. International law follows the same line. Most Western allies have already integrated lesbian and gay service staff. So will we once the European courts rule.

## Susan Sontag retrospective is out of focus

IT IS with some hesitation that I write to criticise so eminent a cultural observer as Susan Sontag, but I feel her position to the "lost" glories of cinema (100 Years of Cinema, March 2) cannot go unqualified. It is a pity that what began as a celebration of the unique power of film should descend into an inaccurate exercise in nostalgia for nostalgia's sake. For example, Ms Sontag informs us that "all films of the silent era... are on a very high artistic level, compared with most of what was to follow" (Go Rescued By Rover is, by definition, a more "artistic" film than, say, Tar-

kovsky's *The Sacrifice*, which we know from elsewhere in her article Ms Sontag considers to have been a "disaster"). Or, only in France were a large number of superb films produced throughout the period from 1930 to 1956. So we can discount Rossellini's masterpieces in Italy in the late 1940s. Or, his output during much of the period, even modest artistic success in (of all places) Britain like *Kind Hearts and Coronets* or *I Know Where I'm Going?* Andrew Cooper, 2 Escher Grove, Mapperley Park, Nottingham NG3 5DR.

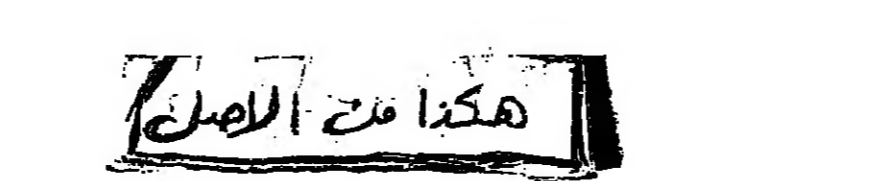
THERE is something fundamentally perverse in Susan Sontag bemoaning cinema's demise at a time when films enjoy near-unprecedented acclaim and success at the UK box-office.

But then, as her article makes clear, Sontag regards today's moviegoer as beneath contempt. As a 23-year-old film apostle I say to you, lo, the resurrection of the cinema is at hand; it is merely the cine-snob who passeth away. Andrew Osmond, 106 Victoria Road, South Ascot, Berkshire SL5 9DS.

#### A Country Diary

CHESHIRE: The change from the blizzards and bitter Arctic winds of recent weeks to a few days of much milder temperatures was all that was needed to encourage some birds to break out into their spring songs and calls. The chaffinch is usually amongst the earliest to respond to seasons, and the brightly-plumaged male perched on the lowest branch of a Scots pine at the edge of the southern woods was singing his heart out. I could hear two more in song deeper into the wood. blackbird, song and mistle thrush, wren and greenfinch — but this was not the full spring chorus, that will take some weeks yet to build up — this was the advance party. The wood was beginning to come to life again, a fresh green carpet was gradually emerging under the trees with the appearance of the first shoots of new grass, along with the young leaves

of the first spring flowers. Still hugging the ground were broad patches of the small heart-shaped leaves of lesser celandine and dog-violet, whilst in the wetter areas the hollow stems of marsh marigold were several inches above the water with glossy, dark green kidney-shaped leaves reflecting the bright light. Hidden away against the trunk of an alder, the purple crocus was already in flower, the marked contrast between orange styles and rich purple petals being clearly visible. On the river, one of the wintering little grebes was in full breeding plumage, its neck cheeks and throat being glossy chestnut, with a white patch at the base of its bill. As the hours of daylight steadily increase, the woodland will be transformed over the coming weeks, and the first summer migrant could have arrived before the end of the month. J M THOMPSON





Diary  
Matthew Norman

WHEN we left Canary Wharf on Thursday evening, my friend Charlie Wilson, acting editor of "the Independent" was in grave peril. He had just been seen heroically running away from his office, at the same time as 100 journalists approached, in the hope of hearing some explanation for the 44 sackings of the previous day. They waited in vain for an hour, until managing editor Colin Hughes arrived from the 20th floor with a message from Gentleman Charlie: he was unavoidably detained. Since then, the foy (and courageous) Glaswegian has hewn a hole in that busy diary of his, and will address what staff remain at 2.30pm today. He will need to make it up, not only in a rabelaisian, since an industrial action ballot will then be taken. One who will not vote is reporter Ian McKinnon. He was sacked last week — although not, notably, by his editor Amanda Pittell. When she forgot to send him the buff envelope, it fell to her secretary to give Mr McKinnon the bad news. You could not make it up, could you? Then again, how little of a Mirror Group Newspapers, perhaps you could.

CORRESPONDENCE concerning handrails electrifies the letters page of transport magazine London Direct. Miss E Hayward writes from Romford, calling for handrails to be put on to District Line trains, to make it easier for her to get on and off. Meanwhile, in a tough, no-nonsense counterstrike, the line's service manager Malcolm Dean hints at just such an innovation. "The refurbishment is planned to be complete early next century," he says. What reassuring news for Miss Hayward, who tells us she is 81 years old.

TOMORROW, I hope at last to reveal the identity of "the journalist" denounced in an article by my friend Peter Bottomley 10 days ago. One man we can eliminate now is the Economist's Adam Raphael, who called me yesterday to say: "It isn't me, although I can understand why everyone thinks it is," he began. "You see, Bolmondely's been obsessed with me for years, ever since we disagreed about random breath testing when he was Transport Minister." Bolmondely recently addressed Cambridge University's Labour club, said Mr Raphael, whose daughter is a member. "She was surprised enough that a Tory MP was speaking, but even more surprised when I tackled me for journalistic distortion and general wrong-headedness. She was the only one who had a clue who I was." This was not a one-off. "When she was at St Paul's," Mr Raphael continues, "she spoke there, and spent ages attacking me by name. Isn't it incredible that she should do it twice to people with not the vaguest idea who I am?"

MEANWHILE, the Sunday Express has news of Bolmondely's wife Virginia. In an article headlined "The right-on members of parliament," the paper reports that the Heritage Secretary "has worn a badge featuring Jaz from Babylon Zoo to Cabinet meetings." This odd girlish side to Mrs Bolmondely is a marvellous detail (where on earth do they get these gems?), but let us pray to God that writer Cheryl Stonehouse checked it very thoroughly indeed.

MY thanks to Police Magazine for further reinforcing that profession's burgeoning reputation for intelligence and sensitivity. An unnamed officer from North Yorkshire CID got home very late after having a few at a party one night, so the journal reports, and found a sleeping bag on the floor of his bedroom. Taking this to be an intimation from his wife that he would not be welcome in the marital bed, he announced "I'm not bloody sleeping in that," picked it up, and threw it into the hall. It was at this point that his wife explained that the sleeping bag contained the eight-year-old daughter of their neighbours, whom she was minding that night.



# Sea-change that signals defeat

## Commentary Hugo Young

ALL round the world, the lights are going out. Everywhere you look — sob! sob! — the left is in retreat. On Saturday, down went Paul Keating, the man who had led the left to victory in the 1993 election. The two most durable pillars of post-socialist world socialism are gone, or so they say at Conservative Central Office. Tony Blair should take serious discomfort from the defeat of his friend Down Under. Given the neurotic fragility of his optimism, he may do so. For John Major, by contrast, Spain and Australia are beacons of hope. His solitary rejection of the pessimism he hears from every member of the Cabinet.

Such analyses are tempting. They recall the simplicities which persuaded some people that Margaret Thatcher, Ronald Reagan's Baptist, the prophet and part-curse of his victory 18 months after hers.

The fall of Keating and the deposing of González, however, have a different significance. To call them the failure of the left is old politics. For there is no left, and therefore no left to fail. The message, in the language of the new politics, is not only different. It has much less ebullient potential.

Keating and González grew out of a recognisable left, but ended by leading from the centre. They had traditional left alliances, notably with trade unions, but their agenda was driven by reform not ideology, and their economic programmes contained little that was distinctively leftist. González was the agent of reforms that carried a deeply conservative country into the modern world where it had to compete, the agent also of its conversion to a fully European economic power. These were essential tasks. But they did not lead in a direction no other party would have taken.

The Australian Labour Party was at the helm for 13 years, González for 14. Parties of the left in power at a time when global forces imposed structural change on all advanced societies. They bridged the moment, the collapse of Marxism, that terminated the project to which both these parties were in theory dedi-

cated. Socialism ceased to be. In Australia and Spanish exponents, being in power rather than out of it, adapted more swiftly than some of their contemporaries, notably the British. Like Mitterrand, they were the incumbents when the world changed for the better, the manifest professionals, seasoned by power, to whom the people were happy to entrust the future.

In Britain, this role fell to a party with the opposite inheritance. The status quo is managed by the old right not the old left. British Conservatism was and is, unlike British Labour, ideological. Its intellectual ground was not whipped from under it, and it continues, more than Spanish Socialists or Australian Labour, to be a party of ideas. But if too was the incumbent when politics the world over became a test more of professionalism and performance than of global doctrine that anyone deeply cared about.

Incumbency, in other words, is the issue. He who rules, loses. The case against incumbents is not that their ideas are wrong but that they have occupied power and, at some point, have not passed the test. González fell through not as far as expected, because of unemployment, boredom and corruption. Keating fell,

further than expected, through boredom and fatigue, though with a lacing of constitutional alarm. Major, leading another party of reform, will fall through perceived fatigue and the corruption of one-party arrogance, not because the people, let alone the Labour Party, fundamentally disagree with what he stands for.

Some aspects of this sea-change already seem to be definable. The laboratory experiments in Spain, Australia and Britain suggest that incumbency makes generous allowances. Only after several terms is the penalty exacted. Where ideas have ceased to mark the critical divide, minimal competence may be enough to see off immediate usurpers.

BUT this circumstance also changes the quality of politics. Today's political leaders are seldom men or women whose salient appeal is the uniqueness of their vision. Since they agree about so many of the fundamentals, their claims to change the world have the clatter of hollow brass. Even among British Tories, more Thatcherite than Mrs Thatcher, are decisions that countermand the post-war consensus on either public spending or the scope of welfare have seldom been made and, if made, only modestly introduced. Caution predominates, on both sides. Tony Blair's anxiety, in all fields that touch on the economy, to make no promises stems not just from pre-election prudence in face of a hostile press but from an awareness that the scope for change is, in fact, quite small.

Further than expected, through boredom and fatigue, though with a lacing of constitutional alarm. Major, leading another party of reform, will fall through perceived fatigue and the corruption of one-party arrogance, not because the people, let alone the Labour Party, fundamentally disagree with what he stands for.

My thesis is open to dispute — the experiments are not yet conclusive. It could be undermined in the US. There, in 1994, the politics of ideology was resumed with a vengeance, sweeping into power a Congress widely believed that school prayer and a balanced budget were the alpha and omega of a politician's purpose. Even if the Republicans don't nominate Pat Buchanan, the world of New Gingrich is what that party will mostly fight for. But just as likely is that, two years after 1994 and for a variety of reasons that go beyond political ideas, Gingrich will be rejected by the people in favour of the President they know. Which raises another question about the nature of this new, practical, managerial politics. What is the point of party loyalty? How can the weakening of party allegiance be relied on to coexist with the durability of a future González, Keating or, for that matter, Major? What matters now, however, is that the incumbents' time had come. The people had enough of one lot, and were ready to try their luck with another. Behind the rhetoric, they were offered rather little, and perhaps would have been alarmed if they had been. So it was with González and Keating. It is not hard to see which party will win the next election. In short, comes these days only in ersatz form. The vir-

# Faith-healers at work in Irish hospitals



Beatrix Campbell

SINCE the stalling of the peace process in Ireland, the Government, almost unnoticed, has been attempting to wield an economic axe which could paralyse West Belfast, already assessed. Downing Street's intentions have been rumbled by a man who might have been expected to keep his own counsel as well as the Government's secrets. Sir George Quigley is a mandarin. An impeccable, amiable lieutenant of Northern Ireland's establishment, a scholar, a banker and businessman, and for most of his professional life a top civil servant. He was the founding chairman of the Royal Group Hospital Trust in Belfast — until he resigned in December in protest against the Government's interference in the trust's affairs. A bitter conflict between Sir George and the Department of Health arose over its direct and discriminatory destruction of the Royal and preferential treatment of the City Hospital, in a predominantly Protestant area.

and the City to the tests required by its own policy. These tests, known as Policy Appraisal and Fair Treatment guidelines (PAFT), are a far-reaching supplement to the Northern Ireland anti-discrimination legislation.

In Parliamentary circles PAFT is known as the McCormack Amendment after its acknowledged creator, Inez McCormack, who was introduced to US president Bill Clinton several times last year as "the most important woman in Northern Ireland". McCormack is a trade union leader like no other. She is no baron. She is a self-effacing woman, a poetic polemicist and ruthless organizer who, according to a colleague, has been "crossing no-goes, boundaries and borders for 25 years." She has built the union from a tiddler to a major mover, its status has been achieved not by force of numbers but by her quest to transform trade unionism, making it more a community movement resourced by the best research available. That is unique in a place given to grandiosity, gut instincts and sectarianism. The Government clearly hates the equality-proofing tests but, in the face of overwhelming evidence of economic inequality based on religion, was forced to adopt it.

Yet now it seems the Government has moved from opposition to inertia. In a recent judicial review, one hospital trust was excused from a PAFT challenge on the grounds that the Government had not given it the guidance. The judge expressed concern that government bodies could evade their responsibilities.

BEFORE the Troubles twice as many Catholic men as Protestants were unemployed. After 20 years of British rule, the unemployment ratio is still about the same.

Notables 10 years ago, Douglas Hurd designated discrimination "a residual issue". It was that implacable indifference that prompted McCormack to sign up to the McBride Principles, an anti-discrimination declaration adopted by many American investors. The Foreign Office dispatched civil servants to the US, trailed by trade union leaders from Belfast, to campaign against McBride. PAFT is the child of McBride.

Unnoticed by the British media, both Protestant and Catholic health service workers, often campaigning together, have been involved in an intense round of strikes and legal challenges to the British government, invoking the PAFT guidelines to heal the inequalities between the regions, between men and women, countryside and city that have shaped their landscapes. Their issues have shadowed the peace process and yet they are still the silent figures in the political debate.

He lost the election, but only just. Against all the odds, Felipe González has proved himself an indestructible force in Spanish politics, says John Hooper

# Felipe viva

THE unexpected outcome of Sunday's general election in Spain shows Felipe González, the country's Prime Minister for the last 15 years, to be not so much a political phenomenon as a political phenomenon. He has become an apparently indestructible as an animated cartoon cat. Plug him full of bullets, blow him up, drop him over a cliff. In the very next frame, he is back again.

He lost, to be sure, but lost by so much less than the polls had predicted, after such a drubbing over the three long years since the last election, that it turned into a sort of triumph for him. It was certainly one of the few election nights in history on which the smiles of the vanquished were wider than those of the victor. At least 19 seats short of a majority in parliament, his opponent, José María Aznar, has been put in a very difficult position. His first task will be to try to stitch together a deal with the smaller regional and national list parties to get himself into power as head of a minority or coalition government.

That, in itself, will not be easy given the mistrust among nationalists of the traditionally centralist right, not to mention the right's mistrust of the nationalists. If, however, he succeeds, Aznar's best bet will be to do what Harold Wilson did in 1964: survive for a few months

in the hope that a snap election yields a better result. In the meantime, a variety of forces will be at work which will be bad for the right, bad for the left, and bad for Spain's European partners. Aznar himself has been discredited as a leader even before entering office. Unlike the Labour barons lined up behind Wilson, his closest aides — and nearest rivals — will be disenchanted by the result. They will be less inclined than ever to trust the judgment of their chief.

What is more, Aznar, as the leader of a weak government, would not only be at the mercy of the Catalan nationalists who emerged as the largest regional force, but also on the receiving end of immense pressure to act irresponsibly. This is the point at which the situation in Spain starts to have implications for the rest of us. If he opts for a snap election, he has to be sure of winning it outright. There are bound to be lags ready to whisper in his ear that the way for him to do so is by playing the nationalist card. With the Maastricht process already looking shaky, the last thing the EU needs is for its fifth largest member state to start setting up on its fiscal discipline. If Sunday's result was bad for the right, then it was bad for the left too. It was a disaster for all those who had hoped to turn the Spanish



Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) back into the decent, honest, idealistic party it once was. Spain under González has generated stress on a scale and at a rate which is awesome to consider. A vast body of evidence has been amassed to suggest the PSOE was up to its neck in illegal financing, and a prodigious volume of commission-taking and influence peddling. The man González put in charge of state security is on bail, accused of mounting a bungled "dirty

war" against Basque terrorism that led to the deaths of several innocent victims. The man González put in charge of the 70,000 members of the paramilitary Civil Guard is in jail, accused of helping himself to well over £10 million before fleeing ignominiously to south east Asia. A number of factors, unconnected with the PSOE, help explain the election outcome. One is Aznar's lack of personal magnetism. Another is a recent history that includes 37 years of dictatorship by the

Amos Oz pleads for peace in an open letter to a Palestinian friend

# Hand in hand to hell?

ISRAEL is our homeland; Palestine is yours. Anyone who refuses to live with these two simple facts is either blind or evil. Two and a half years after signing the Oslo Accords you and we have still to agree about the terms of peace. We still have to work hard, negotiate, persist with some issues, make concessions on some others. But, after three generations of fighting each other, we have at last agreed to start healing the wounds. This is what Yasser Arafat meant when he spoke about the Peace of the Brave. If Yitzhak Rabin was a brave man; he paid with his life for his effort. Shimon Peres is a brave man; both his life and his political future are at stake. Now is the time for Yasser Arafat to demonstrate that he too is a brave man or to give his place to someone braver than him.

There are hundreds of clauses to the Oslo Accords, but the essence is clear and simple: we stop ruling over you and suppressing you, and you recognise Israel and stop killing us. But up until now we have delivered and you haven't. Israel is no longer controlling the lives of 65 per cent of the Palestinians in the territories. The Palestinians, for their part, have not stopped killing us. In fact, more Israelis are being killed by Palestinians after the agreement than before. The symbol of your recognition of Israel — the cancellation of the Palestinian Covenant calling for our destruction — is still delayed. I know: the injustice, the humiliation, the misery and the loss which your people have experienced, and for which both your people and mine are responsible, are not yet gone. But then the injus-

tice and the losses inflicted on us Israelis by your fanatic and uncompromising leaders for many decades cannot be undone either. The purpose of peace is not to erase all past sufferings but to prevent further suffering. We must both choose now. My friend, I have not forgotten the fact that hundreds of thousands of you are still rotting in miserable refugee camps. Nor am I ignorant of the fact that the Palestinian autonomy is less than an independent nation, or that problems such as Jerusalem and the Jewish settlements are still unresolved. Is there anyone amongst you who seriously maintained that everything could have been resolved in two years? Do any of you really think that you could possibly take without giving, or that Israel can give without taking? You say that Israel had

given you too little. Perhaps so. And yet, it is a fact that Rabin's and Peres's Israel has given the Palestinians more in two years than the entire Arab world has ever done for them. Whatever the Palestinians have got now has been achieved for them not by Arab weapons, not by the superpowers, not even by bloody Holy War, but by a narrow majority of Israelis who have, at last, reached the conclusion that military occupation and suppression are both immoral and useless. This is a moment of decision: a shaky majority of Israelis still support the Oslo Agreements, but even within this majority there are some who are beginning to consider other options. Even our doves cannot bear a situation where Land for Peace means that Israel gives away land and gets less and less peace. Some of us are now looking into ideas such as drawing our border with you unilaterally, according to our best interests, disengaging the Israeli population completely from the Palestinian population and defending ourselves from behind these new borders. It is unthinkable that

Israel will go on living by its Oslo commitments while you Palestinians pay us with post-dated cheques, claiming that it is too hard for you to cancel the covenant, too hard to fight with Hamas, too hard to change the contents of antisemitic school textbooks, too hard to isolate your fanatics. Of course it is hard for you; but, alas, it is quite hard for us Israelis to get killed every day. "We aren't strong enough," you say, but it is not just strength which must be put to the test now. It is, first and foremost, your courage and integrity. If you and your friends remain quiet now, if you make do with muzzling half-hearted condemnations and offering private condolences over the phone to your Israeli friends, Oslo might soon become a missed window of opportunity. If this happens, it will fulfil the dark visions of your engineer and our doctor: Goldstein and Ayash still threaten to return hand in hand from hell and bring hell upon us all. Now it is your turn to rise and fight for peace. Don't delay. © 1996 Amos Oz

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10 OBITUARIES

Meyer Schapiro

# Peeping into glory

**M**EYER Schapiro, multi-disciplinary critic and historian, galvanic teacher, lifelong radical and for more than 50 years a pre-eminent figure in the intellectual life of New York, has died at the Greenwich Village house that had been his home for more than 60 years. He was 91.

As an academic, Dr Schapiro excelled in two completely different fields. It was as a historian and elucidator of Romanesque sculpture that he made his name in 1931. He also wrote on 19th-century and early-20th-century art — from Courbet and Cézanne to Mondrian and the Abstract Expressionists — in ways that gave new dignity to the discussion of modern art.

But it was not in his nature to function as a specialist within any one particular discipline. Schapiro was a seer of the seminar with specific "turf" of his own to protect. It was, in fact, the very essence of Schapiro that he never conceived of any aspect of art, of belief or of language, in isolation.

He regarded all forms, schools and systems of knowledge as interrelated and interdependent. As far as he was concerned, he had been put on earth to know, and to know he was in the company of others. He raised in general conversation, he could usually name not only the necessary books on the subject but the chapter heading and the page reference most appropriate. In this respect, he was a unique figure. Equally remarkable was his visual memory for works of art that he had once seen and never forgotten.

When the sculptor Jacques Lipchitz was newly arrived in New York from Europe during the second world war, he spent an evening in Schapiro's company. The talk turned to the great collections of tribal art in the Musée de l'Homme in Paris, and in particular to a piece that he had seen there. Schapiro took a sheet of paper and drew from memory and to scale, not only the piece in question but every other piece that had been in the case with it some years before. He did not see this as an extraordinary feat. Artists and writers prized in particular the unexpected, and far-ranging connections that he could summon up when in their company. The French painter Fernand Léger was almost all he had to say about the observances of any kind, and when Schapiro took him to the basement of the Pierpont Morgan Library during the second world war he may have wondered what was in store for him.

But it was thanks to Schapiro that Léger found, in an 11th-century illumination from the Beatus Apocalypse, an important element in the vocabulary of his later paintings. Schapiro was on many occasions on which Schapiro dealt with living artists on an inspired basis.

On another occasion, in 1952, he convinced Willem de Kooning that his Woman I was not a failure, as de Kooning had supposed, but a success from which other successes would surely come. More recently, the point was put with ideal concision by RB Kitaj. "Meyer Schapiro was here," he wrote. "Like having Plato in the living room!"

In 1974, on the occasion of Schapiro's 70th birthday, 12 of the leading artists of the day made original lithographs, etchings and silk-screens that were sold in an edition of 100. The proceeds were given to a fund for the endowment of a chair in Schapiro's name in the department of art history and archeology at Columbia. The artists were Jasper Johns, Ellsworth Kelly, Alexander Liberman, Stanley William Hayter, Roy Lichtenstein, André Masson, Robert Motherwell, Claes Oldenburg, Robert Rauschenberg, Frank Stella, Andy Warhol and Saul Steinberg.

Schapiro was born in Siauliai, Lithuania, the descendant of Lithuanian Jews. In 1906, his father, Nathan Schapiro, emigrated on his own to the United States, where he found work as a teacher of Hebrew. After a year, he sent for his family. While Nathan's son was being processed at Ellis Island, Schapiro entered the United States. His name was changed from Meir to Meyer.

Yiddish was the first language in the family home, but he kept up with literary (as distinct from religious) Hebrew, secular Bible studies, the theories of Darwin, books on language, the contemporary socialist press and much else. While at school Meyer Schapiro was encouraged by his parents to let his curiosity run free. He read, drew, wrote and developed photographs, mastered electrical gadgetry and did not disdain sports.

In 1920, aged 16, he graduated from high school. In September of that year he entered Columbia College as the holder of both a Pulitzer scholarship and a Regents scholarship.

Already convinced that he would never make the grade as a practising artist, he studied Latin, living languages, mathematics, ancient and modern literature, anthropology, philosophy and art history. Still not yet 20, he graduated with a degree in art history and philosophy. What he called his "sense of the deep connections of art with the totality of culture" was already shaping the direction of the life's work that was to come.

Both anthropology (under Franz Boas) and architecture (under Lewis Mumford) tempted him, meanwhile, and art history as then taught at Columbia seemed to him almost desultory, based as it was on courses given, in his view, by "men who had never really conducted investigations after writing their PhD theses." But art history remained the discipline that would best satisfy both his love of learning and his love of art. Turned down by the department of art history at Princeton — a rejection that he attributed at least in part to his being Jewish — he accepted a graduate work in art history at Columbia.

The next few years were decisive for his career. The distinguished medievalist Ernest DeWald had moved from Princeton to Columbia and Schapiro spent his first year in his office. He read, drew, wrote and developed photographs, mastered electrical gadgetry and did not disdain sports.



A fiery and agile intelligence... Meyer Schapiro never conceived of any aspect of art, of belief, or of language, in isolation. PHOTOGRAPH: RICHARD SANDLER

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He chose as the subject for his doctoral dissertation the cloister and portal of Moissac, an abbey in southwestern France, built circa 1100 and known for its Romanesque sculptures. Those sculptures had always been regarded primarily as religious art, but Schapiro saw the road to Gothic art and the work of anonymous artisans who wished only to dedicate themselves to God.

But in 1923 the French art historian Emile Male argued in his book on 12th-century religious art in France that, on the contrary, they marked "the very inception of the modern tradition in sculpture."

Five years of research, much of it on site in France and elsewhere, went into the doctoral dissertation, which was accepted by Columbia in 1929. Schapiro's research went far beyond the implications of Moissac itself. Medieval church history, liturgy, poetry, secular art, illuminated manuscripts, folk-dance, epigraphy, the analysis of ornament and national characteristics (real or imagined) all were pressed into service and synthesised. As a result, what had been thought of as antiquarian artifacts were seen to have a completely different character.

"A new sphere of artistic creation," Schapiro called it, "without religious content and imbued with values of spontaneity, individual fantasy, delight in colour and movement, and the expression of feelings that anticipated modern art. The new art on the margins of religious work was accompanied by a conscious taste of the spectators for the beauty of workmanship, materials, and artistic devices, apart from religious content."

Schapiro taught primarily at Columbia, where he became assistant professor in 1936, associate professor in 1946, full professor in 1952 and university professor in 1965. Named university professor emeritus in 1973, he taught a weekly graduate class on theory and methods of investigation in art.

He also lectured at New York University from 1962 to 1989, part of his New School for Social Research from 1936 to 1952. His lectures at the New School had a particular importance for artists and writers in that they coincided with the development of the New York school of painting that was to win widespread international acclaim.

Meanwhile, European modernism was still little known in the US, and when paintings by Picasso, Georges Braque and Joan Miró arrived in New York they were often seen literally out of context. Schapiro validated them in intellectual, historical and moral terms that were a revelation to many in his audience.

During the 1930s, the Schapiros' home in Greenwich Village was much visited by members of the radical left, and Schapiro became a contributor to the Marxist Quarterly, the New Masses, the Nation and Partisan Review.

Saul Bellow, however noted that "Meyer never took part in any of the quarrels and backbiting and vendettas." He was the one person in the Village against whom no one had anything terrible to say.

For many years, Schapiro was reluctant to publish (or, perhaps, to lecture) his papers. An annunciatory quality had always been fundamental to his performances on the platform and in the classroom. The printed page ruled out the new insights that came crowding in, or so it seemed — on the moment and in the heat of exposition. For this reason, his output in print between 1931 and the late 1970s was almost absurdly small in relation to his reputation as both an art historian and a writer of the most inspiring teacher of his time.

Vincent Van Gogh (1950) and Cézanne (1952) were treasure texts, but brief. Words and Pictures (1973), likewise brief, applies the new Schapiro of semiotics to the study of medieval illuminated manuscripts. Other writings had almost a clandestine circulation.

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Barbara Laws

**BARBARA** Laws, secretary to the Guardian Obituaries desk, died yesterday after a brave struggle against cancer. She was 56.

Barbara joined the Guardian in 1965 to work for the leading writing team and immediately made a mark with her no-nonsense attitude. In 1990 she took her considerable talents to the Obituaries and Letters desks where her wit, kindness and common sense helped editors, contributors and the bereaved steer a steady course through what can sometimes be difficult waters. She was never fazed by dramatic turns of events, in newspaper terms, and dealt quickly and calmly with those who were. She had a wonderful eye for craft and an instinctive and heartening radicalism.

When Barbara's illness was diagnosed shortly before Christmas, her response was typically robust. She fought hard and her bravery and ability to discuss her fate rationally was an inspiration to the many colleagues who visited her at home where she remained for most of her illness. We will miss her.

Jeanette Page

Letter

David Ross writes: Lord Marshall, (obituary, February 23) introduced Britain's first, 1976, wave power programme — the Labour government was worried about dependence on coal. A reporter asked if wave power would be safer than nuclear. Nuclear power was not dangerous, said Marshall, opening the continuing nuclear versus wave energy debate. The fair Marshall would have been developed, provided nuclear had the lion's share of funding.

Birthdays

David Astor, CH, former editor of the Observer, 84; Christine Davis, president, Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland, 84; Anthony Labour MP, 45; Anthony Hedges, composer, 65; Robin Herbert, horticulturist, 62; Richard Hickox, conductor, 48; Melvin Laskey, former editor, Encounter, 74; Elaine Paige, singer, 44; Barry Took, TV, radio, comedian and conductor, 65; Des Wilson, liberal campaigner, director of Corporate and Public Affairs, BAA plc, 55.

Death Notices

BATCHELOR, On February 28th 1996 after a short illness, Oliver Hugh of Bedford, Bedfordshire, died at 81. He was the son of Paul, Tim and Claire, loving "Gramps" to Paul, Tim and Claire, loving "Gramps" to Paul, Tim and Claire. Buried at Bedford Crematorium on Thursday, March 7th at 2.00pm. Friends may call at 12, Kingsley Crescent, Watlington, Oxfordshire, OX10 9JH. Tel: 01235 822944.

Acknowledgments

WARLEY (Richard John) Mrs. Ken Brewer with to thank all those who have visited, attended the service at Woodford Church, Essex, on 27th February 1996. Also thank you to the staff of Woodford Crematorium, Essex. Tel: 0201 700 1222.

Memorial Services

FRANÇOIS-SIMONE, Marlene. There will be a gathering to celebrate Marlene's 80th birthday, 8th March at 2.30pm in Harcourt Hall, 100, Harcourt Street, University of London. Mail Street, London WC1.

Births

ADAMS. On the 2nd of March at the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital to Amelia (nee King) and Christopher, a daughter, Melissa Adams.

850 plus your announcement telephone 071 611 9520

## Spellbound by an inspired scholar

Sir Ernst Gombrich writes:

**T**HE NEWS of the death of Meyer Schapiro will sadden the many friends who admired his extraordinary scholar. On my first visit to the United States, in 1949, I regularly attended his lectures at Columbia University on 18th century French art. The words "spellbinding" comes to mind for his inspired delivery and the astounding range of his associations and knowledge.

I was privileged also to visit him at home and to have many memorable conversations with him. I am happy to say that for many years we kept in contact. He also visited our house in London, and I especially remember a lecture he gave in Hampstead on

French literature or German art theory. Precious as are his publications on French medieval art, on Van Gogh, and especially on more progressive in his conversation. An *anima candida*, devoid of malice or ambition, he resembled an Old Testament prophet rather than an academic. There will never be another Meyer Schapiro.

"Recent movements in American art", when, in the discussion, he vigorously defended the right and the duty of the artist to experiment, which for him was a healthy symptom of a free society. He had made the whole of the history of art his province, from late antiquity to the modern movements, but he especially remembered a lecture he gave in Hampstead on

read and write calmly and constructively about some of the larger issues facing the Church and the world. Harold Wilson once boasted that when he was Prime Minister he used to clean his own shoes. A critic replied that this is not what we pay a prime minister to do. Both had a point. The question is not, Should leaders live in luxury? but, How can we make the best use of scarce resources of skill and experience?

**Round sounds**  
I'M STANDING in a small room, shouting the names of fruit at the wall and wondering how round I can make the first syllable of apricot. I'm aiming for bulbous. After 10 minutes of hard syllabating, my mouth is running on autopilot and I'm left wondering how I ever got into this. This being radio, Or, more specifically, voice-training lessons at the BBC's expense

... I've got a strong northern accent, set to one volume. Loud. Even worse, I'm impossibly lazy; in fact, so vocally flabby I sound as though I've been drip-fed Novocain and plugged into an echo chamber. My passport gives my place of birth as Rochdale, my accent emphasises it in a fuzzy monotone.

I slipped into radio by accident... I rang the BBC with a few ideas and was asked to record them. It binned the tapes and I was packed off to a voice coach... He asks me to imagine I'm on a stage, looking out across a huge audience. I try my best and start firing off nouns of fruits. The imaginary audience fires them right back. The windows are securely double glazed, which is just as well. The building looks out over a dusty intersection and I wouldn't have liked to disturb the traffic... The idea is that each time I come to a proper noun, I have to imagine I'm framing it with my voice... I emphasise every name with a pert little flourish at least a notch higher than my normal voice. [My coach] tries to look pleased but I can see him wincing. He suggests we move on to consider my sentences: "Your voice seems to slip away at the end."

I say, "Yeah, I do that, me." Nicholas Blincoe gets his mouth around BBC English in the Big Issue. **Boxing clever** Forrest Gump: Life is like a Box of chocolates... Forrest Dahmer: People are like a box of chocolate, YUM!

Jackdaw



I and eye

CEZANNE's career is a Hegelian's dream. The thesis and antithesis here are the Dionysian and the Apollonian. An alternative formulation: the I and the eye. The early undisciplined figure-compositions depicting murders, rapes, or suicides and the like were realised with the same intense inner need to externalise such visions as impelled him to include sado-masochistic erotic poems in his youthful letters to Zola. Compared with his contemporaneous groups of bathers that do not have a narrative content, the fantastic pictures at most seem to have been

pointed in the way we may leave, even though they both went on to a glorious late period. Cézanne had died in 1897, our impression of his artistic identity would have been radically different from what it is. It would have been that of an artist of great and diverse qualities who produced masterpieces but never really got it all together — not quite Frenhofer, but not an artist who was on the verge of the grand synthesis throughout his last 18 years.

**Church perks**  
THE LIFESTYLE of bishops seems to be a subject of perennial fascination. First it was houses; then money. Pensions will be next on the list. Lacking from the discussion is any serious consideration of what bishops actually do... His primary focus must be on those issues which have diocesan, regional or national implications... This is one reason why it is better for him to read a news-

paper which can help to feed his understanding of large-scale issues rather than to read one which deals with highly personalised ones. He also needs to understand the culture of those involved in decision-making and in shaping public perceptions. Because time is short and he cannot do everything, this may mean avoiding the temptation of keeping down with the Joneses. There is a spurious "common man" syndrome which can easily mask an attempt to escape from difficult responsibilities... He has to operate at a level of housing and income which, while not directly comparable to that of those who share similar responsibilities in the secular world, not so embarrassingly different that easy contact with them is frustrated. He needs the kind of space which allows many different things to go on in the same house. He needs the financial resources to enable him to use limited time to the best advantage. And he needs that relative freedom from domestic worries which might encourage him to think and



Streets ahead... Big Issue

akeov

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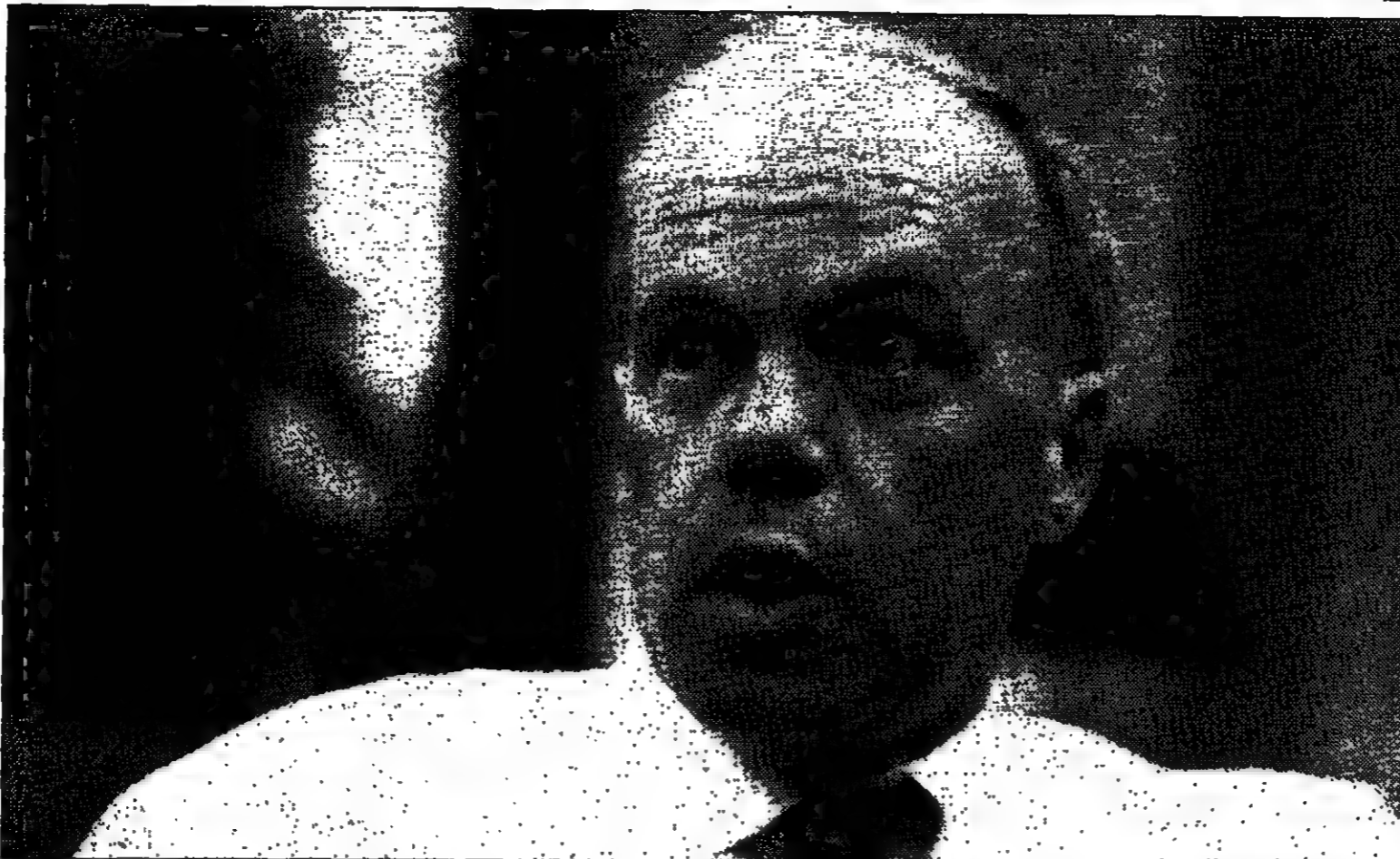
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# Finance Guardian

## Cunard up for sale in wake of deal

Trafalgar victor... Erik Tonseth says buyers for luxury shipping line are already on horizon

PHOTOGRAPH BY HAMILTON WEST



# Takeover sets QE2 adrift

Ian King in London and Roger Cowe in Hong Kong

CUNARD, the luxury shipping line that owns the QE2, was yesterday put up for sale after its owner, the struggling engineering, construction and shipping conglomerate Trafalgar House, agreed to a \$204 million bid from Norwegian shipbuilding and engineering combine Kvaerner.

operators, plus American firms such as Carnival Cruises and Disney. P&O, the British cross-Channel ferry operator which itself has been the subject of bid speculation, was also put in the frame.

"exploding" toilets, blocked sinks and "building site conditions". Some 150 passengers have sought compensation and in January it was revealed that John Olsen, Cunard's former chairman, received a \$497,000 pay-off after effectively carrying the can for the fiasco.

was sold last year, and Express Newspapers, disposed of in 1993. But the main Trafalgar businesses attracting Kvaerner are Davy, the engineering and construction business that recently won a \$500 million contract in Thailand, engineering group John Brown and the French construction engineer Sofresid.

He said: "Trafalgar's difficulties were obviously greater than we had anticipated when we bought the initial stake, but it would be inappropriate to say more."

The deal also poses questions for the future of Amec, the construction group for which Kvaerner unsuccessfully bid \$380 million last December, and in which the Norwegian firm holds a 26 per cent stake.

## Storm brews on nuclear front

Chris Barrie

THE Government is preparing to write down the value of the nuclear stations being prepared for privatisation later this summer by up to \$3 billion in an effort to flatter the industry's profits and sweeten the sale for investors.

## Chancellor heartened by improved housing market

Sarah Pyle and Cliff Jones

CHANCELLOR Kenneth Clarke, who is writing a further cut in interest rates this week, last night welcomed signs that the housing market may be on course for recovery and that high street spending is picking up.

## Speculators warned to steer clear of bucket shops

Dan Atkinson

INVESTORS were warned yesterday to steer clear of high-pressure bucket-shop operators offering speculation in the foreign-exchange market.

## News in brief

**N&P customers in line for £750**  
National & Provincial Building Society savers and borrowers stand to gain more than £750 if they vote in favour of the £1.35 billion takeover by Abbey National next month, writes Cliff Jones.

## Channel link sweeteners 'will leave Tory policy all at sea'

Keith Harper  
Transport Editor

THE first independent condemnation of the Government's £5.7 billion subsidy for the Channel tunnel rail link came yesterday from an adviser to the House of Commons transport committee, who described it as "unjustified state aid".

## PolyGram rides in

Lisa Buckingham

Sundance gains big-gun ally for TV project, writes Lisa Buckingham

## Hong Kong Notebook Support brings on new worries



Alex Brummer

JOHN Major's fleeting but significant visit to Hong Kong, squeezed between trade missions to Bangkok and Seoul, will have some way to reassuring British voters that Britain will not stand uppinely if China seeks to abrogate the twin agreements of the Joint Declaration and Basic Law.

Hongkong Land and its public shareholders out of their misery. The mystery, however, is not about the stock-picking skills of Hongkong Land executives but what went so wrong at Trafalgar. It is relatively easy to explain the difficulties of Cunard, and the public humiliation surrounding the refitting of the QE2. What is harder to deal with is the plunge into ever deeper losses and reorganisation costs at two of Britain's most established and better engineering businesses, Davy International and John Brown.

## Bank on hold

THE Bank of China, clothed in its elegant, 10-story I M Pei-designed tower, dominates the Hong Kong skyline.

Mr Major has gone out of his way to emphasise Hong Kong's role as an open city and taken pains to stress that if the "through train" of greater democracy were halted on June 30, 1997, then it would not be just a British problem but an international problem.

## Golden leaves

Charles Golden, chairman of Vauxhall, has resigned to become chief financial officer of the pharmaceuticals company Eli Lilly in the US.

## Electricity rush

Seven of the privatised regional electricity companies have joined the rush of 11

## Lesson denied

Nick Leeson's German lawyer yesterday denied that the former Barings rogue trader conspired up to \$23 million in bank accounts in Germany.

## ICI expansion plans

ICI, which yesterday unveiled the \$390 million acquisition of South American paints group, Bunge, underlined its plans to expand in high growth markets with the appointment of senior Hong Kong businessman, Mr H C Lee, as a non-executive director.

## Body Shop rethink

Anita and Gordon Roddick yesterday called off plans to buy up all the public shares in Body Shop, the "green" cosmetics chain they founded 20 years ago.

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PHOTOGRAPH: DON MURPHY

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Money is not the point for press baron who dubbed communist prime minister a 'turtle egg with a zero IQ'

JIMMY LAI brushes aside talk of the risks he takes as the sole Hong Kong newspaper baron...

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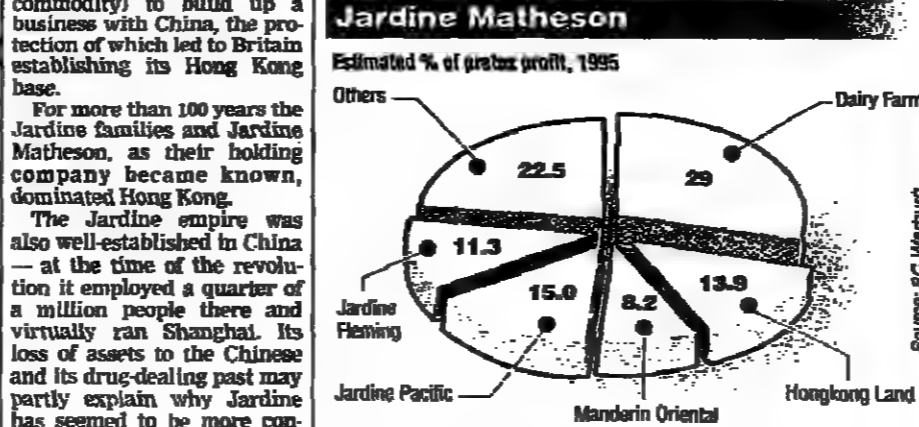
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Norman strikes with spare Cobra

David Davies on a win the Australian owed to his wife, coach and two dogs

GREG NORMAN turned apparent catastrophe into total triumph in winning the Doral Ryder Open in Miami on Sunday. The victory, with a 19-under-par 269, two shots ahead of Vijay Singh and Michael Bradley, had seemed unlikely midway through the final round.

Norman had to play four holes of the third round in this rain-affected event early on Sunday, and at the last hooked his tee shot almost into the water. He salvaged a wonderful birdie immediately after the round doubts began to set in.

He had at first thought that his drive at the 18th had been hit off the tee, but further consideration led him to the practice range. "What had really happened," he said after the win, "was that the driver had gone dead. Something inside the head had caved in. I was hitting my three-wood further than the driver."

Normally there would be no problem if a player has two drivers with me," said Norman, "but in this case because I was living at home I did not. Home, however, was a four-hour round-trip by car up the Florida Turnpike, so emergency measures were called.

Enter Norman's wife, Laura, and his Ball Jet Ranger, his jet-black helicopter with "Shark" in gold lettering on the side.

Norman, having travelled to work at Doral in his, dispatched it back home, and meantime rang Laura. "Go into my workshop," he said to



Driving force... Greg Norman looks for the fairway off the 5th tee on his way to victory at the Doral Open in Miami

his non-golfing wife, "to the right-hand corner of the workshop, and bring all the drivers you can find."

She did so, met the helicopter near their home, flew back to Doral and delivered the clubs to Norman with half an hour to spare. "Fortunately she had the one I needed, I had time to hit about 20 shots with it on the range, and that was it. I have never, never gone to the course so under-prepared with a club."

The club in question was a Cobra, and it was not even the silver metal as the one it replaced. The Australian won the Doral using titanium — an appropriate space-age

metal for a high flier such as Norman. "I only had one mis-hit with it," he said, "so I'll probably keep it."

At least it earned its keep on Sunday. Norman won \$324,000 (£220,000) from the \$1.8 million pot, enough to cover the cost of any extra helicopter fuel.

He was delighted with his win, but not in the conventional sense. "To win while not playing your best, while on full song, is great. I certainly wasn't as sharp as I like to be this week." This despite a chance meeting with his regular coach, British player, Norman, who was in Doral to do television commentary; that

led to a practice session which has given Norman several things to work on. "I hadn't seen him since August, last year and some faults have crept into my game since then. But these days these coaches are so popular you have to make appointments with them, not then you."

There were two final pieces in the puzzle that helped Norman to win. They are called Foster and V.B., names that will be familiar to Australian beer drinkers, and they are his yellow labradors. Norman has a putting green and bunker in his back garden and works on his short game there. "I've been

working hard on that aspect of my game," he said yesterday, "and this week was one of the best I've had for chipping and putting. You need that when you're not as sharp as you'd like."

Foster and V.B. were witnesses to that work. "They come out with me, one sits by the bunker and the other by the green and they're my gallery. It can get awfully lonely out there by yourself."

So that is the recipe for victory these days on the US Tour. One helicopter, one helpful wife, one coach revisited and two labrador dogs. It is no longer, if it ever was, just a walk in the park.

● Bernard Gallacher, the former European Ryder Cup captain, will become President of the Golf Foundation, the body responsible for developing junior talent, at its annual meeting today. Ian Peacock, chief executive of the Lawn Tennis Association since 1986, will succeed Findlay Picken as chairman of the Foundation's council.

● Germany's Sven Struwer has won the European Tour Gofer of the Month award for February after his maiden victory in the South African FGA Championship.

● Maurice Camacho, the Malton trainer, was not impressed with Avro Anson's

Racing Dunwoody confirmed for Alderbrook

THE Champion Hurdle picture cleared yesterday when Richard Dunwoody confirmed that he will ride Alderbrook, the 4-5 favourite, at Cheltenham next Tuesday.

The decision came as it was revealed that Dermot Wald's Fortune and Fame, the horse Dunwoody was due to ride, would not run.

Dunwoody, who schooled Fortune and Fame after racing at Leopardstown on Sunday, announced his plans at Windsor yesterday. He explained: "Fortune and Fame did a good piece of work, but obviously Mr Wald was not happy with him. I am very happy getting the ride on Alderbrook. It is a great opportunity."

Kim Bailey, Alderbrook's trainer, who was also at Windsor, was relieved at Dunwoody's decision to continue the partnership which was successful in Kempton's Levy Board Hurdle last month.

Bailey, desperate to finalise riding plans after his stable jockey Norman Williamson was sidelined by injury, said: "I'm delighted everything has been fixed up."

A spokesman for Michael Smurfit, sponsor of the Champion Hurdle and part-owner of Fortune and Fame, said: "The decision to miss Cheltenham for the second time in the last three years was taken on veterinary advice."

"Fortune and Fame is not lame and Mr Wald was happy with his work at Leopardstown, but the decision has been made not to travel on veterinary advice."

Last season, Williamson became the first jockey since Fred Winter in 1961 to ride both the Champion Hurdle (Alderbrook) and Gold Cup (Master Oats) winners in the same year.

Dunwoody could well add his name to such a feat for his rides on Man, the 5-4 favourite, in the Gold Cup.

Maurice Camacho, the Malton trainer, was not impressed with Avro Anson's

six-lengths win in yesterday's Racing Channel Novice Chase at Doncaster and said that his eight-year-old will not run in the Sun Alliance Chase at Cheltenham next week.

"I expected to come here and see Avro Anson win comfortably, but I thought that was a moderate effort," said Camacho. "It wasn't his jumping that disappointed me — that was adequate. He just didn't travel very well in the race and I believe he needs to be more competitive."

"I can only say with respect to all the other horses in the race that it wasn't a very good show."

Smith's Band, a 20-1 shot for the Martell Grand National, has had a training setback and will miss the race at Aintree on March 30, Jimmy Fitzmaurice said.

Smith's Band has had a successful year (winning three times) but won't run again this season.

It is nothing too serious and, hopefully, he will be back for all the big races next season.

Smith's Band's defection still leaves Mrs Pitman with three entries in the race, including last year's winner Royal Athlete.

Jimmy Fitzmaurice's horses have been running well lately and the Malton trainer looks all set to gain his sixth win in the last fortnight with Rustic Air in the Robin and John Simpson Memorial Handicap Chase at Sedgefield today.

Rustic Air has had her share of injuries and her run at Nottingham last month when she first since winning a novice chase by seven lengths at Market Rasen three years ago.

She was in the lead when falling two out, but made no mistake at Leicester last month when, eased right, she won the race by three and a half lengths from Ardcroney Chief.

Rustic Air (4.00) should have further improvement in her and a 7lb penalty for that, but it may not stop her scoring again.

Leicester

Table of Leicester race results including race numbers, names, and outcomes.

Sedgefield

Table of Sedgefield race results including race numbers, names, and outcomes.

Newbury runners and riders with form guide

Table listing runners and riders for Newbury races with form guides.

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Results

Table of race results for Doncaster.

Results

Table of race results for Uttoxeter.

Results

Table of race results for Windsor.

Results

Table of race results for Newbury.

Advertisement for 'dian' with a large image of a person's face.

Advertisement for RACELINE with a grid of numbers and text.







WORLD CUP CRICKET

Group A: Australia v West Indies

Relief as Richardson pulls out the stops

David Hopps in Jaipur

RICHIE RICHARDSON was granted respite yesterday from what he described as the most wretched days of his life...

from the start. Whenever the pressure threatened he inevitably received another invitation to cut or pull.

Scoreboard

Table with columns for Team, Player, Runs, Wickets, Overs. Includes Australia and West Indies players like Mark Waugh, Steve Waugh, and Ian Bishop.

half-heartedly. Waugh's off-spin also played a part in the moment which determined that it would be Richardson...

Ponting's vast potential had been evident in his second one-day century, 102 from 111 balls, which was conspicuous for his ability to manoeuvre...

Mark Taylor, the Australia captain, is of similar mind. Asked who would win the World Cup he responded: "Australia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan... with the West Indies as outsiders."



Captain's innings... Richie Richardson (facing) is embraced by his West Indies team-mate Jimmy Adams after scoring 93 not out against Australia yesterday.

Rugby Union

Rowell offers to speak up for Leonard

Robert Armstrong finds England chief prepared to attend tomorrow's hearing

THE England manager Jack Rowell has offered to represent Jason Leonard at tomorrow's disciplinary meeting...

Peter Clohessy of Ireland was given a 26-playing-week ban when a video showed him stamping on the head of the France forward Olivier Roumat.

Rowell said yesterday at Twickenham, where the RFU announced that it would take the findings of the commission before taking any action.

Punching is a sending-off offence, though many referees nowadays prefer merely to caution the offender.

Rowell has been given permission by the Five Nations Committee to discuss the subject which will be held this month.

England send for Ramprakash

Mike Selvey in Karachi

MARK RAMPRAKASH, whose international career seemed to have ground to a halt after a disastrous tour of South Africa, has been given an opportunity to play in the World Cup after all.

Ramprakash who has been given the vote of confidence. "He has been on standby throughout," Illingworth said yesterday.

"We would look foolish," Illingworth said, "if someone broke a finger in a fielding practice or became ill during the night and we didn't have a spare batsman on hand."

re-establish himself. Fairbrother has probably played his last international for England. Never established as a Test batsman, he made a name for himself as a one-day specialist.

"I've waited four years for another go at the World Cup and for it to end like this is very disappointing," he said. "Perhaps losing the last World Cup final was a greater disappointment but this is pretty bad."

Illingworth and Atherton look safe as Lord's ponders other points

Paul Weaver

THE spring meeting of the Test and County Cricket Board will, a cynic might suggest, address England's humiliating performance with customary forthrightness.

World Cup holders in a couple of weeks." Yet Illingworth's dual role as team manager and chairman of selectors is certain to be a talking point, however informal.

The board will discuss the recommendation from its cricket committee that three points should be awarded for a draw in the County Championship.

World Cup holders in a couple of weeks." Yet Illingworth's dual role as team manager and chairman of selectors is certain to be a talking point, however informal.

The suggestion that there should be a maximum of five fielders on the leg side in the three domestic one-day competitions should make life less confusing for bowlers required to bowl to a 6-3 field one day and 6-4 the next.

Rugby League

McNamara up for sale

Paul Fitzpatrick

STEVE McNAMARA, the Hull captain, was put on the transfer list yesterday and may interest Bradford Bulls and Wigan.

McNamara, who made two substitute appearances for Great Britain against France in 1992 and 1993, is impatient. He feels that he is good enough to play in Super League now, and he is not prepared to wait for Hull to arrive in the promised land.

The Bulls, whose coach Brian Smith signed McNamara when in charge at the Boulevard, have been linked with the Great Britain player previously. But they will not buy at Hull's asking price of £250,000.

Ice Hockey

Play-offs luck for Steelers

Via Batchelder

THE Sheffield Steelers, having retained the Premier Division title, gained ample consolation reward when the draw for the British Championship play-off groupings was made.

drawn ahead of the last qualifiers Newcastle Warriors. So the Steelers, having won the Benson and Hedges Cup last December and clinched the league title last week, remain on course to complete the Grand Slam. It has been achieved by only Cardiff, Dundee and Durham, but surprisingly the Steelers' general manager Alex Dempster claimed: "The Grand Slam itself means nothing to me."

Warriors go for glory and a place at Wembley while the Kings must battle for survival with the bottom team, Slough, and Division in the play-offs to decide relegation and promotion. There are plans to form a Super League next season, however, so all that may be academic.

Sport in brief

Table Tennis

Lisa Lomas, the only Briton to have qualified for two events in the sport at this July's Olympic Games, may miss next month's European Championships in Bratislava, writes Richard Jago.

Boxing

Steve Collins yesterday invited Nigel Benn to challenge him for his WBC super-middleweight title. Benn may reconsider his decision to retire, made after he lost his WBC super-middleweight title to Sugar Ray Marlinga in Newcastle last weekend.

Motor Racing

The Italian Giancarlo Fisichella will make his world

championship debut when he replaces Takao Kamei of Japan in the Minardi-Ford team in Sunday's Australian Grand Prix, Fisichella, 23, was the Italian Formula Three champion in 1994 and raced touring cars for Alfa Romeo last season.

Swimming

The South African Penny Heyns broke the women's 100 metres breaststroke world record in Durban yesterday. Heyns, swimming in a heat at the South African national championships, clocked 1:10.46, beating the record of 1:10.88 held by Samantha Riley of Australia since September 1994.

Motor Sport

The world champion Colin McRae is poised for victory in the Rally of Thailand. The Scot, in a Subaru Impreza 555, had a commanding lead of 1min 28sec over his teammate Kenneth Erkkonen when one leg remained. Erkkonen lost his closest pursuer for second place when Mitsubishi's Tommi Makinen retired with transmission trouble.

No Dutch tractor for Barcelona

B



# SportsGuardian

## FRENCHMAN'S STRIKE CUTS NEWCASTLE'S LEAD TO ONE POINT

Premiership: Newcastle United 0, Manchester United 1

# Cantona turns the screw

David Lacey

**A** GOAL from Eric Cantona early in the second half, following a series of saves by Peter Schmeichel early in the first, reduced Newcastle United's lead at the top of the Premiership to one point at St James' Park last night as Manchester United forced their way into a match which at one point had seen them reduced to the role of bewildered bystanders.

While this match was never going to settle the argument at the top of the Premiership, each team was in a position to make an important debating point — three if possible. The championship was still Newcastle's to lose, but a victory for Manchester United would remind everyone that it might be Old Trafford's, or even Anfield's, to win.

Kevin Keegan's team went into the game with 13 successive home league victories, but Newcastle's recent chemistry had been disturbed by goings and comings.

Manchester United had won their previous eight games, home and away, and the 3-0 demolition of Bolton at Burnford Park just over a week earlier had shown a team brimming with form and confidence. Alex Ferguson's players knew, moreover, that if Newcastle were going to be caught even a draw represented a weak option.

For Keegan, David Betty was rather the opposite. Having been signed from Blackburn last Thursday, Betty had expected to miss the game by completing a two-match suspension. But a loophole in the regulations, combined with Peacock's ankle injury, brought £3.75 millions worth of tenacity straight into the Newcastle team.

Manchester United were again without Ballister, who had broken down in training with a recurrence of his back



Nowhere to go... Newcastle's Les Ferdinand finds his way blocked by a determined Steve Bruce at St James' Park last night. PHOTOGRAPH: RUI VIEIRA

injury. This restored Gary Neville alongside Bruce at centre-back. It also robbed United of important height at the heart of their defence.

Manchester United had Schmeichel to thank for not going two down in the opening four minutes. Asprilla, teasing their defence from the

start, twice sent Ferdinand clear of the last defender but each time Schmeichel denied Newcastle.

The Dane bravely blocked Ferdinand's first shot then saved the second with one hand. In the eighth minute Asprilla switched the ball back to Beardsley, whose shot

again found Schmeichel equal to the moment.

Luck and the crossbar saved Manchester United after 21 minutes. Butt gave the ball to Asprilla and then fouled the Colombian in trying to get it back. Albert's 25-yard free-kick rebounded from the bar near the right-

hand angle. Keane failed to clear the rebound and after Asprilla had glanced the ball into the goalmouth Ferdinand waded it into the stands.

Asprilla continued to catch the eye, and the tackles. Phil Neville went the way of Butt for bringing the Newcastle man down from behind, and Gary Neville survived loud appeals for a penalty when his challenge sent Asprilla sprawling. Manchester United were living on their nerves.

One of Manchester United's problems lay in the time it took for Cantona to become an influence on the game. Ginola, on the other hand, was a growing Gallic threat after an indifferent start. Always ready to take on defenders on Newcastle's left, he ended the first half as impressively as Asprilla had begun it on the opposite flank.

But ended it somewhat fortunate still to be on the field, having become caught up in a scuffle with Barton following a corner from Giggs and vain

Manchester penalty appeals for hands. The frustration was understandable, Giggs having just seen a close-range shot deflected behind by Albert after Phil Neville had turned the defence on the left.

Manchester United achieved more in the opening three minutes of the second half than they had done in the previous 45. Barton rescued Newcastle after Cole had cut past Howey on the left, and then Cole was unable to get in a proper shot after Cantona's cross from the right had exposed the defence.

Nevertheless, a goal for Ferguson's team was not far away. It came after 51 minutes when Cole saw off several challenges before working the ball out to Phil Neville, whose cross found Cantona at the far post with time and space to drive the ball past Srnicek.

Newcastle United: Schmeichel, Barton, Howey, Albert, Beardsley, Lee, Betty, Beardsley, Ginola, Asprilla, Ferdinand, Schmeichel, United: Schmeichel, Lee, Bruce, G. Neville, P. Neville, Sharpe, Sita, Keane, Giggs, Cantona, Cole. Referee: G. Ellery (Harrow-on-the-Hill).

## Rowell takes step back to go forwards



Richard Williams

**S**O WHAT did it prove, exactly, that game at Murrayfield on Saturday? That Jack Rowell was right all along? Or that he should never have considered dropping Dean Richards? That Will Carling remains the best captain of England within living memory? Or that the Scottish revival was never more than a chimera? That professionalism will definitely ruin rugby union? Or that it has changed nothing?

It was, in any aesthetic sense, a rotten game. After 25 minutes, with the score at 8-3 to England, I looked at my watch and realised that nothing remotely worth remembering had happened yet.

When was the game going to start? In those terms it never did.

But there is more than one way to look at the afternoon, and if there is a consolation to be taken from such a spiritually barren affair it is that professionalism really has changed nothing, once the whistle blows and the game is on.

What, after all, does "professionalism" mean in this context? To start with, we are accustomed to using it to convey two quite opposed ideas. Yet whether we take it as a synonym for a dour, win-at-all-costs pragmatism or as a shorthand term for the paramount obligation to entertain the paying customers, this game was unaffected by anything outside the immediate needs of the two teams. In that sense it was truly an amateur affair.

**W**E HAVE seen many games like this in the Five Nations Championship. Even in the Seventies there were some confrontations that made Saturday's match look like the Borg-McEnroe tie-break. But no one, so far as I recall, was calling for anybody's head. It was accepted that this was how the game sometimes turned out and you'd just have to come back again next year in the hope of something more satisfying.

No, the deeper significance of Saturday afternoon was the way it raised the question of priorities. Last summer

Rowell saw Richards left floundering by the speed and athleticism of the All Blacks in a traumatic World Cup semi-final, and he made the decision to rebuild the team without the Leicester man in the drive to the 1995 tournament. The manager clearly felt that England had to head all their efforts towards the need to match the qualities of the southern hemisphere teams if they were to go on or two steps further next time.

Come the Five Nations, though, and what happens? A scrappy defence in Paris, a nervous show in the Welsh, a Scottish revival filling the back pages, and the old necessities reassert themselves.

Richards was useless on Saturday, his presence resulting in the classic description of the man once given by the France forward Laurent Cabannes to the journalist Ian Borthwick: "There by day, half his teeth missing, cheekbones smashed, hair all over the place, his skin looking as if it had not seen the sun for six months. He looked as if he had just come out of a bunker. But what a player."

**O**N SATURDAY he did exactly the opposite. He assigned him, restoring authority to the line-out and a sense of physical threat to the back row. He slowed the game to his personal tempo, turning the Scots' attempt to spread themselves. It cost them the Grand Slam, but it was worth it. They were bitter about it afterwards, but their complete inability to cope with Richards meant that they did not deserve the prize. They had the same number of players as England, and home advantage. They have put themselves to blame.

All praise to England, then the brilliantly astute Rowell, the revived Richards and the rest of the team achieved the only target available to them: by the only set-piece route. But Rowell will know that in so doing he has put his own longer-term plans on a step or two, perhaps outdistancing his players' not to mention the fans' still further. The next time England play a southern hemisphere team, will Richards be there? Or is this really just a one-off?

If Rowell wants to restore his relationship with the media, he might start by coming clean on that question, by admitting that just for the day his much-wanted, but apparently misunderstood rebuilding operation was put on hold in order to sort out a specific problem. Unless, that is, what he saw on Saturday is giving him second thoughts.

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**Guardian Crossword No 20,592**  
Set by Quantum

**The English rowers, tall, slight, gangly, have the earnest faces still of schoolboys who try hard. The Americans seem all natural power and confidence. Perhaps it is easier to see them as golden, laid-back stars than as an unpleasant reminder of where the future might lie.**

**Across**

- X file destroyed with oil fire. Eternal preparation required? (6,2,4)
- Request a coarsely-woven ruffian (7)
- Time duck's walk? That's nonsense (7)
- Took in couch — right for artist's studio (7)
- Pen for study OK (7)
- Station produced noise at dawn we hear (5)
- Female director (8)
- Producer of forbidden list returned to student? (8)
- Bird in constant depression (5)
- Turns pro and becomes one's legal rep (4,3)
- Loaf some like one in Hall? (7)
- Experience hackneyed joke, say, that's old hat (7)

**Down**

- It's the limit once meter fails (7)
- Drink without head to side with the French, held abroad (2,5)
- Cover in ground at rugby training break (8)
- Eye the spirit measure (5)
- Student left lucrative job (7)
- Attach in handwriting? One is rather fussy (7)
- Disobedient RC later can't reform (12)
- At which one's just in time (8,4)
- Unorthodox cheer with tail wagging? (9)

**17** In an intermediate state no longer (7)  
**18** Fit? Get away like a rocket (4,3)  
**19** It's in N. America it's plan (7)  
**20** Parking's likely to be flexible (7)  
**22** Ancient Scandinavian race, mainly cold (5)

**Solution tomorrow**

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